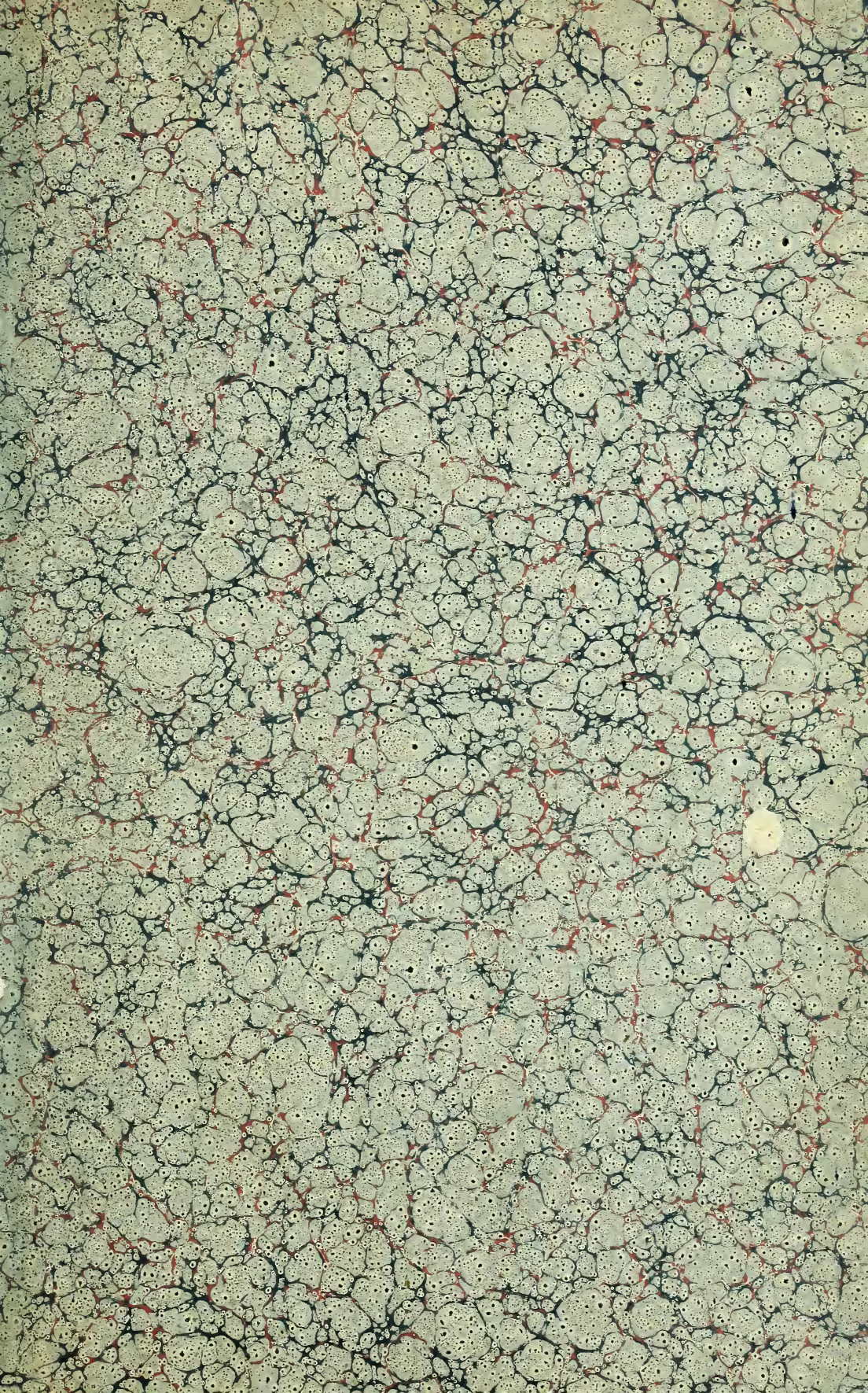




*George Washington Flowers
Memorial Collection*

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FAMILY OF
COLONEL FLOWERS



Presented to my nephew John,
who is my representative for the
Cincinnati, which I possess from
my father.

Peter Doyle
Philad. Penn. U.S.A.
1873

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M^{is} d'Oyley Paris.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF
THE SOCIETY
OF
THE CINCINNATI.

BY ALEXANDER JOHNSTON.



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The Society of the Cincinnati.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA:

When I accepted the flattering invitation to read a paper before this Society, I recollected that I had certain facilities of access to a new and original source of information, capable of throwing light upon a subject connected with our Revolutionary annals, which has hitherto met with a neglect on the part of historians that is easily accounted for—not because the matter itself is of secondary consideration, but because of the great poverty of material.

I am indebted to the Secretary-General of the Society of the Cincinnati for the liberty of referring to the archives of that institution.

I soon found myself embarrassed with the riches of a chest containing all the inedited correspondence and the other records that have been accumulated since the formation of the Society.

Here are the autographs of

WASHINGTON,	PINCKNEY,	LINCOLN,
LAFAYETTE,	MOULTRIE,	ST. CLAIR,
HAMILTON,	STEUBEN,	PUTNAM, and
KNOX,	MIFFLIN,	PAUL JONES.
GATES,	WAYNE,	
GREENE,	LEE,	
of ROCHAMBEAU,	DESTOUCHES,	DE SÉGUR,
LUZERNE,	GOUVION,	THE PRINCE DE
D'ESTAING,	DU PLESSIS,	CONDÉ, and
DE LA GRASSE,	DE NOAILLES,	LOUIS XVI.

These, with many others, the most distinguished names of the most distinguished era in our national history, gave importance to the documents over which I had control, and sufficiently impressed me with the dignity of my subject.

But, as this rare and interesting repository is shortly to pass into abler hands than mine, I dipped but sparingly into its contents; using it rather to modify or embellish what I could derive from other sources, than to anticipate by any feeble effort of my own the pleasant task of a more extended compilation. Still, I adhered to my original design; and, in the paper which I will have the honour to read before you this evening, I propose to give SOME ACCOUNT OF THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI.

The close of the Revolutionary War was a critical period in the history of the infant Republic. After hostilities had ceased, but while Sir Guy Carleton still held the city of New York, and before the terms of a definite treaty

of peace had been duly settled, the American forces lay encamped at Newburgh, on the banks of the Hudson.

No longer occupied by dangers from without, their thoughts naturally turned to the change that would be effected in their condition at the disbandment of the army. The din of battle was hushed, the clouds of smoke which had enveloped the field were risen; and they saw before them, dimly enough, an uncertain prospect, which the spirit of mutiny threatened to invest with all its former darkness.

Eight years had elapsed since the first blood was spilled at Lexington. The ploughshares and pruning-hooks which were then beaten into deadlier weapons, had since become well-tempered steel, and were not so easily to be beaten again into ploughshares and pruning-hooks.

The soldiers, drafted as they were from every condition in life, had lost in that interval some their tastes for the arts of peace, and others their skill in cultivating them—the craftsman his cunning, the lawyer his learning, the man of letters his fondness for books. Both officers and men easily foresaw the embarrassments that awaited their retirement from the field. They knew that with their arms they would put off much of the military *prestige* that sustained them during the conflict, and, thrown upon their own meagre resources, their dependence must be slight in the extreme. The arrearages of pay already amounted to a heavy debt, for which no adequate provision had been made. In this extremity, they looked to the Congress then assembled in Philadelphia. But here they were met by a temporizing policy, com-

plaints of an exhausted exchequer, and the claims of the *toga* once more to assert its ascendancy — an opposition chiefly due to the influence exerted outside of the Hall, by such as had idly awaited the issue of the war, but who were now, of a sudden, become clamorously patriotic.

These watchful guardians of the commonweal, with an alacrity they never exhibited in the hour of real peril, flew to their pens, and became “Cassius” and “Civis,” “Vox Populi” and “Publicola,” in the journals and pamphlets of the day. They looked with a jealous eye upon the proposal to found a retired list, or anything in the nature of a pension to smooth the declining years, or to support the impoverished families, of those who had left their homes in the hour of need, to lay down their lives for their country. They affected to see in this simple act of justice something fatal to the spirit of equality, and declared that half-pay for life was but the first step towards the introduction of a privileged class of stipendiaries upon the common purse.

Nevertheless, a bill to that effect was actually passed; but, backed as it was by neither coin nor credit, to give it due significance, a proposal to commute the half-pay for life to five years’ full-pay, was generally acceded to; and certificates indefinitely promissory were issued on the faith of the Congress. These tickets of commutation were freely parted with by the needy beneficiaries of so slender a bounty, to the more provident civilians, at the ruinous depreciation of six shillings in the pound.

Whilst these things were agitating the calmer councils of a deliberative body, the turbulence in the camp had

reached a formidable pitch, and the murmurs of the disaffected soon claimed the serious attention of the Commander-in-Chief. The desperate alternative was even proposed of relinquishing the service in a body if the war continued, or, in case of peace, still to retain their arms, in defiance of the civil authority. A military dictatorship was held preferable to a condition of things where sufferings and privations such as they had just undergone could be slightly passed over by an ungrateful republic. The signs of disaffection spread beyond the limits of the camp: wherever a soldier was to be found, the rebellious spirit was extant. Soon after, at Philadelphia, a band of military insurgents menaced the hall of legislation itself, and the representatives of the people were obliged to seek refuge in Princeton from the dangers of an assault.

It was then that Washington exhibited that exquisite tact that has more than once saved his country; when, without compromising his dignity, he could pay a proper deference to either extreme of party, and, by marshaling together the allied forces of mutual concession, courtesy, and kindness, put to rout the spirits of discord, with a skill far beyond the most brilliant exploits of strategy. His moderate counsels soon calmed the general agitation; and everywhere order and discipline were once more restored, within the sphere of that august presence.

Meanwhile, certain of his companions in arms, fully impressed with the danger of the doctrines that had been broached in their midst, determined to mark their disapprobation by some signal device; and happily hit upon an

expedient that met with the cordial approval of their illustrious chief.

The human mind is so constituted as naturally to seek in signs and symbols those impressions which a simple abstract idea is incapable of fully imparting. The very term *impression* is co-relative to something palpably obtrusive; and to overlook this principle argues a weakness of philosophy which, as well in religion as in politics, must eventually yield to the natural cravings of the common mind. It is all very true, and no one will deny the proposition, that it is the part of a good citizen, in time of peace, to lay down the arms he has assumed in time of war. But let some outward sign — a statue, a picture, a *medal* — indicate the profound veneration in which the virtues of a good citizen are held, who, in his own conduct, exemplified this truth at an earlier period of the world's history; and the precept thus strikingly set off by the historical precedent, will arrest the attention of every observer.

Such were the sentiments that animated the hearts of some of the most gallant officers of the American army, on the 10th of May, 1783; when they met together on the borders of the Hudson, and, converting the name of the Roman dictator into a Latin plural, called themselves "The Society of the Cincinnati."

Noble and patriotic as the motives were that led to this combination in the first instance, other and equally generous feelings conspired to give additional respect to the undertaking.

Comrades in arms who had fought side by side in the

bloody fields of the Revolution, were about to be separated—the closest intimacies were to be severed—and they longed for some link that would still unite them together at periodical intervals, when they could revive around the social board the scenes of their past privations and repeated triumphs. They set aside for their annual festivity the day on which the Declaration of Independence was signed—since become the national anniversary.

Besides this, the society was to be eleemosynary—each officer contributing one month's pay toward the creation of a fund for the support of indigent widows and orphans of deceased members.

Another and most important object was to confer appropriate honours upon their noble allies, the officers of the French army and navy, who had so materially assisted them in the late struggle.

The plan had been previously communicated to the several regiments, who appointed an officer from each; and these, in conjunction with the general officers, formed the preliminary meeting.

Baron de Steuben, Major-General, and the senior officer present, was called to the chair. The proposals were then read and adopted—and Major-General Knox, Brigadier-Generals Hand and Huntington, and Captain Shaw, were chosen a committee to revise the same, and to report at the next meeting.

Agreeably to adjournment, the representatives of the army met together three days after, at the quarters of Baron de Steuben, and then and there the institution of the order was duly accepted

The three fundamental articles upon which it is based, are these :

An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature, for which they had fought and bled, and, without which, the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.

An unalterable determination to promote and cherish between the respective States, that union and national honour, so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American Empire.

To render permanent the cordial affection subsisting among the officers.

All the officers of the American army, as well as those who had resigned with honour, after three years' service in the capacity of officers, or who had been deranged by the resolutions of Congress, upon the several reforms of the army, as well as those who should have continued to the end of the war, had the right to become parties to the institution, provided they subscribed one month's pay, and signed their names to the general rules.

The General Society, for the sake of frequent communications, was divided into State Societies.

The President General was directed to transmit as soon as might be, to each of the personages hereafter named, a medal containing the Order of the Society, viz :

His Excellency, the CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE, Minister Plenipotentiary.

His Excellency, the SIEUR GERARD, late Minister Plenipotentiary.

Their Excellencies,

The COUNT D'ESTAING,

The COUNT DE GRASSE,

The COUNT DE BARRAS,

The CHEVALIER DE TOUCHES,

Admirals and Commanders in the Navy.

His Excellency, the COUNT DE ROCHAMBEAU, Commander-in-Chief of the French forces.

And the Generals and Colonels of his army, and acquaint them, that the Society did themselves the honour to consider them as members.

Generals Heath, Steuben, and Knox, were appointed a committee to wait on his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, with a copy of the institution, and request him to honour the society by placing his name at the head of it.

Major L'Enfant of the French engineers, who, like the unfortunate André, of the same rank in the British army, was an accomplished draughtsman, took charge of the decorations; under his supervision they were executed in Paris, and to his taste the Society is indebted for that graceful design.

It consists of a bald eagle of enamelled gold, bearing upon its breast a medallion charged as follows: on the obverse, the principal figure is Cincinnatus; three senators present him with a sword and other military ensigns; he is reclining upon his plough, and at his side are minor implements of husbandry. On the reverse, the sun rises over a city with open gates, vessels are seen entering the port, and in the midst, Fame crowns Cincinnatus with a wreath, inscribed, "*Virtutis premium.*" Below, hands joined

support a heart, with the motto, "*Esto perpetua*." The whole is pendent to a blue ribbon edged with white, descriptive of the union between France and America. Around the principal charge is the legend, "*Omnia relinquit servare rempublicam*" — a piece of latinity of questionable elegance.

But it was the motto, "*Esto perpetua*," unexceptionable Latin, but dangerous doctrine, that raised an outcry against this new feature in the State, which, at our day, seems perfectly incredible.

To perpetuate the memory of an eventful period—to raise the glow of generous emulation in the breast of posterity—to supply the broken links in an endless chain of good fellowship—it was decreed that the eagle should descend from father to son, according to the law of primogeniture, or, in failure of issue, to his collateral heirs in the due line of inheritance for ever.

Then it was that "Cassius" and "Civis," "Vox Populi" and "Publicola," once more flew to their pens. The half-pay had been obnoxious enough, but now the pack opened in full cry.

At that time, pamphlets were the favourite vehicles for conveying political squibs, and giving vent to all that ephemeral passion which now finds an outlet in popular harangues and the daily journals. Pamphleteering, indeed, had reached the dignity of a separate profession. The booksellers were flooded with transitory productions, that soon found their way to the trunk-makers, some of which, by their whimsical titles, still attract the attention of the curious in literature.

Ædanus Burke, an eccentric Irishman, who held a seat on the supreme bench of South Carolina, had read the famous letters of Junius, and emulous of a similar distinction, headed the conspiracy; he called himself "Cassius," and wrote a violent tirade against the Society.

He proved conclusively to many apprehensions, by a specious train of argument, that the whole object of the institution was to undermine the Republic, to usurp the supreme power of the State, and to fix upon the succeeding generation an hereditary race of patricians, as powerful as any that prevail in the monarchies of Europe. The descendants of this military order of knighthood and their connections would form the nobility on one side, and the mass of the people on the other would be an insignificant rabble. He called upon posterity to mark his words. For, as he argued, the evil, countenanced as it was by so many powerful names, was past a remedy. The vile contrivance, fraught with destruction, had already been dragged to the citadel — and, like Cassandra or the high priest of Apollo, he only shrieked in despair his prophetic warning,

——— summâ decurrit ab arce

Et procul, O Miseri! quæ tanta insania cives?

The pamphlet was ably written, and caused no little sensation. The legislatures of some of the States appointed committees to inquire into the grievance. In every instance the report was unfavourable. Rhode Island disfranchised such of its citizens as were members of the Society; and Massachusetts declared it to be "dangerous to the peace, liberty, and safety of the Union."

The consternation crossed the Atlantic. The celebrated

Mirabeau, prince of pamphleteers, then an exile in London, amidst dissertations on the opening of the Scheldt, on Stock Jobbing, Cagliostro and the diamond necklace, the Bank of St. Charles, and such like farrago, edited a French version of Burke's pamphlet, with copious annotations; in which he was assisted by his friend and faithful adherent, Nicholas Chamfort.

The future leader of the National Assembly, in memory of his extraction, recalls a scrap of Florentine history as a case in point. "It will not be contended," he says, "that the caprice or superstition of the rich and powerful men who gave birth to the orders of the Garter, the Golden Fleece, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick, was a cause so big with important consequences, as the favourable opportunity which the authors of the American Revolution have seized on, and the obvious designs that they manifest. No order of knighthood can bear comparison with theirs, but one, and that with disadvantage, the military order of St. Stephen, of Tuscany, instituted by the first great Duke Cosmo de Medicis, in commemoration of the battle of Marciano, in which the Republican party was utterly defeated. This, as is well known, was the last blow given to the Commonwealth of Florence, and the monument of its destruction."

But Mirabeau upon Burke was not half so learned a commentator as Time upon both of them. And we, of the present generation, who have read the works of this last great author, and *edax verum*, know more about the matter than all the wise-acres that have ever put pen to paper.

Meanwhile, as may be imagined, the friends of the Society were not idle. Burke's pamphlet met with a prompt reply. But the zeal of some of its advocates carried them beyond the bounds of discretion.

In a sermon preached before the Cincinnati at Philadelphia, they were addressed by the worshipful title of "the most worthy;" and at the annual meeting of the New York Society, a demonstration was made that was prompted by all the spirit of opposition.

On this occasion they determined to initiate the honorary members who had been newly elected, by the ceremony of a formal investiture. The assembly room at the City Tavern was the scene of the solemnity. The outside of the house was decorated with festoons and crowns of laurel — opposite the door of entrance, on a dais tapestried with blue cloth, was elevated a great chair of state covered with light blue satin, fringed with white; at the back of this, was a staff supported by two hands united holding up the cap of liberty, which was again grasped by the eagle of the Order, bearing on a white fillet the motto, "We will defend it." At each extremity of the room amphitheatres were erected for the spectators.

A deputation consisting of four members dressed in their uniforms, and wearing their eagles, first waited on the Governor of the State and the President of Congress with the congratulations of the Society on the anniversary of American Independence. After their return with the report, that they had been received with all the attention due to the dignity of their Order, the ceremony commenced.

The foreign members, and such as belonged to the other

societies, had already taken their seats on the left of the chair. The kettle-drums and trumpets, an important part of the performance, were stationed in the gallery over the door, and the amphitheatres were filled with spectators, when the standard-bearer, Captain Guyon, in full continental uniform, wearing his order, and escorted by four members, also in full dress, entered the hall, and took his position in front of the dais. He held in his hand the standard of the Society. It was wrought in silk, displaying the eagle upon thirteen alternate stripes of white and blue. The escort returned; and, led by the Masters of Ceremony, the procession then entered the hall. First came the members, two and two, followed by the secretary, Captain Pemberton, carrying the original institution of the Society. Then came the treasurer, General Van Cortlandt, and his deputy, Major Platt, bearing two satin cushions, on the first of which were displayed the eagles, and on the second the diplomas for the elected members. These were followed by the Vice-President, General Schuyler, and the President, Major-General Baron de Steuben, who brought up the rear. At his entrance, the standard saluted, and the kettle-drums and trumpets gave a flourish, which continued until passing through the avenue now formed by the members opening to the right and left, he mounted the steps and took his seat upon the Chair of State.

When this was done, Colonel Hamilton, soldier, orator, and statesman, pronounced the inaugural address. After which the ceremony of investiture commenced.

The recipient was conducted by one of the Masters of Ceremony to the first step before the chair of the President,

and the standard-bearer approached. After expressing a desire to be received into the Society, and promising a strict observance of its rules and statutes, he grasped the standard with his left hand, while with his right he signed his name to the Institution. The President then took one of the eagles from the cushion held by the treasurer, and invested the recipient in the following words: "Receive this mark as a recompense for your merit, and in remembrance of our glorious independence." Next, handing him a diploma, he said, "This will show your title as a member of our Society. Imitate the illustrious hero, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, whom we have chosen for our patron: like him, be the defender of your country, and a good citizen." Another flourish of drums and trumpets completed the ceremony, and the new member was introduced to the Cincinnati at large, who rose in a body to salute him. This was succeeded by a brilliant festival, which, amidst salvos of artillery, terminated the day.

But it was in the gay capital of France — the land of forms and ceremonies, of rank and title, of martial enthusiasm, and decaying grandeur, that the Society acquired a distinction it never possessed on this side of the Atlantic.

The young Marquis de Lafayette — the Scipio Americanus, fresh from the scene of his glory, presented himself at the foot of the throne, and sought permission from his Sovereign to wear, along with his cross of the most ancient and honourable Order of St. Louis, the illustrious eagle of Cincinnatus. The only foreign Order suffered to be worn in the service of His Most Christian Majesty was that of the Golden Fleece; but, by a signal act of condescension,

the especial privilege was accorded to the French Cincinnati of appearing at court with the new decoration.

Lafayette, who lived with Washington upon terms of domesticity that savoured more of the relation between father and son than of ordinary friends, received from him as President-General the first account of the formation of the Society. The young enthusiast, then only twenty-six years of age, acknowledged the honour in language which does credit to the warmth of his feelings.

“When he thought that his letter would be read among representatives from all the lines of the army,” he declared, “that his heart glowed with the most unbounded sentiments of affection and gratitude. How pleasing it was for him to recollect their common toils, dangers, turns of fortune, and that lively attachment which united them to each other under their beloved General. Never could his heart forget the return of affection he had particularly obtained, the number of obligations he was under to his dear brother officers, and the happy hours, the happiest in his life, which he had passed in their company.”

Versailles at that time exhibited all the vivid, but flickering brilliancy that precedes extinction. It was the interval when, indeed, the age of chivalry was gone, but before that, of sophisters, calculators, and economists, had entirely succeeded, and while the “glory of Europe” still played in a parting halo about the throne of the Bourbon.

The officers who had returned from the New World, flushed with the recent triumph of the French arms, were flattered with the smiles of a gay and enthusiastic court. To bear about with them the distinguishing mark of their

gallantry, whether it was at the ceremonials of the palace, in the smaller *coteries* of the Trianon, or in the *salons* of the capital, was the ambition of every one who had served in the war. The sum of 60,000 livres was voluntarily subscribed by the officers of the army, a similar amount was to be made up by the fleet, and all to be transmitted to the General Society in America. But these liberal offers, by a nice sense of delicacy, were respectfully declined. Petitions and memorials poured in upon the General Society, on the part of claimants who had been overlooked in the distribution of the much-coveted honour. These were accompanied by all the necessary vouchers, affidavits before notaries public, recommendations by their superior officers, and the chief ministers of the crown, and, in one instance, a certificate in the sign-manual of the king himself.

One had been a prisoner in England; another had been recalled at an early stage of the war; one had been promoted for his gallantry at the siege of Savannah; another had served under Paul Jones in his glorious engagement with the *Serapis*. The Chevalier de Lameth pointed to his wounds received at Yorktown, and the eldest son of De Kalb claimed in right of his father.

Diplomas had been issued only to the generals and colonels of regiments and legions of the land forces, and to the admirals of the navy. But the captains of the navy declared that they ranked as colonels in the army, and asked in their turn for the mark of merit. On the representations of Rochambeau, D'Estaing, and Lafayette, their diplomas were despatched by an early packet. To

exhibit their gratitude, they caused to be made a brilliant decoration, after the model of the one already adopted, but richly set with diamonds, and surrounded by an emerald wreath of laurel. This was presented to the first President-General, in the name of the French naval marine; and, since the days of Washington, it has been regularly transmitted to each of his successors in office, and is now worn by the Hon. Hamilton Fish, of New York.

In fact, our allies looked upon the Society as created entirely for their own distinction, and such is the account that Rochambeau himself gives in his Memoirs. So to this day with Van Blaremborg's picture of the surrender of Yorktown, in the gallery of Versailles. The French general and his staff, with Lord Cornwallis, fill up the foreground of the picture, whilst the American army is lost in the vanishing lines of the perspective.

The badge of the Society, worn on public occasions, both in court pageantries and at the military reviews, soon became familiar to the eyes of the people; and, a few years afterwards, it was called to mind with an ominous significance.

It was on the day of the first popular outbreak, the memorable 12th of July, 1789, that Camille Desmoulins, breathless from Versailles with the news of Neckar's dismissal, mounted a table in the garden of the Palais Royal, and proposed that first of all considerations in French revolutions—a cockade. “What shall it be?” he exclaimed to the excited multitude around. “Shall it be green, the colour of hope? or shall it be blue, the colour

of the Cincinnati and of American independence?" Voices in the crowd called out, "Let it be green, the colour of hope!" and thus the ribbon of the Order was saved the disgrace of being affixed to the red cap of the *sans culottes*.

But green, the colour of hope, was found to be also the colour of the Count d'Artois' liveries; so it was forced to give way to red and blue, the colours of the arms of Paris. But these again were the colours of Orleans, not yet *Égalité*; and soon afterwards Lafayette himself, then in command of the National Guards, at the *Hotel-de-Ville*, introduced a conservative strip of the old national white; and thus the renowned *tricolor* became the flag of France.

But we must leave the *tricolor*, and return to the stars and stripes.

When the first effervescence was over, the opposition in America rapidly declined. The active energies of the country began to develop themselves; the popular sentiment took a new turn; and the Cincinnati were suffered to spend the Fourth of July after their own fashion. And, surely, nothing could be more attractive than these annual gatherings; nor could anything be so well calculated to foster the spirit of '76. With a proper regard to the principles of their Order (for the New York demonstration was an exception to the rule), they laid aside, on these festive occasions, the military blue coat, with its broad buff facings, but still retained the cocked-hat, knee-breeches, and small-sword. The crowning grace of the costume was the hair, carefully powdered, and brought down behind to a pig-tail, always an object of tender

solicitude. Here the veterans of the war met as boon companions, and fought their battles over again. The vacant sleeve of one, pinned up to his shoulder, told of the arm he had lost at Trenton or the Brandywine. Another had replaced with a wooden substitute the leg he had left on the bloody field of Monmouth. Scarce a soul of them but had some scar to remind him of the recent struggle. The talk was about Sumpter's brigade and Tarleton's legion; or of "Mad Anthony" at the head of Febiger's regiment, when they carried the garrison of Stony Point; or, perhaps, it was about the new constitution, or the prospect of a war with their ancient allies. The conviviality was loud and long, for they drank deep in those days. At a late period of the evening, a tankard of some generous liquor would be passed from mouth to mouth; and, as it made the orbit of the table, would describe upon its own axis a very large segment of a circle. It was the nation's birth-day! Sore had been the travail that brought forth the child of promise; and now, as the auspicious event cheered their hearts with hopes that fell far short of the destined reality, they made merry, and drank wassail to the young heir whose broad acres should stretch from the frozen regions of the North to the Tropic; from their eastern boundary to shores where the Orient becomes Occidental.

The badge was frequently worn on public occasions. In many of the portraits of Stuart, where the sitter was a member of the Society, it is yet to be seen, obtrusively pendent from the button-hole. The honourable principle was scrupulously observed: the only instance of degrada-

tion I have been able to discover, was that of a member from Rhode Island, who was divested of his ribbon for making a legal tender of the depreciated paper currency in payment of a debt.

Thus years rolled on. But the hilarity of each succeeding meeting was a little dashed by sad and sadder reflections, as the toasts to the departed increased in number. In some instances their places were supplied by their descendants, but in many more no one was left to claim the vacant honour.

Nothing worthy of special note appears on the records, until an event transpired which sent a thrill of delight through the whole nation, and called for the particular notice of the Society of the Cincinnati. In the summer of 1824, General Lafayette revisited the shores of America. And who could more appropriately greet him than such as survived of his brothers in arms? The Cincinnati of New York selected his birth-day for congratulating him at an entertainment that surpassed all their previous festivals, both in interest and magnificence. Who shall describe the emotions of their illustrious guest as he was ushered into the great saloon of the Washington Hall, on this memorable occasion! Since the war of independence he had been whirled in all the vortex of a terrible revolution—at one time the idol, and at another the execration of the mob. By a natural train of association, what contrasts must have crowded his mind! His suppers at Madame Du Barri's when a young *mousquetaire* at the profligate court of Louis XV., and his slender rations at Valley Forge. The grand *fête* of the *Champ-de-Mars*,

when he led the militia of France, and his crust in the dungeons of Olmutz. He sat beneath a canopy of oak and laurel; and when the triumphal wreath fell from the beak of the eagle suspended above his chair, his breast must have throbbed with the recollection of his past glories: when he was carried wounded from the field at the Brandywine; the battle of Monmouth; when, at the head of the American infantry, he stormed the redoubts at Yorktown; when, in the land of his birth, he stood between royalty and the rage of furious men and still more savage women, and, kissing the hand of the queen upon the balcony at Versailles, saved, for a brief space, the life of that unhappy princess.

On the removal of the cloth, and when the memory of the departed had been drunk in solemn silence, what shades must have passed before his mind's eye! Peerless and first, his early friend and almost father, "the Cincinnati of the West," who died in the fulness of honours, and in the quiet retirement of his farm. His younger friend Hamilton, who shared with him the fortunes of war, but who had since met with an untimely death. The tall figure of the Count d'Estaing—a victim of the guillotine. Henry, who distinguished himself at Fort Mifflin, and died a Field-Marshal of France. His kinsman, the impetuous De Noailles, who was killed in a naval engagement with the English. Du Plessis, who was massacred at St. Domingo. The adventurous La Pérouse, whose fate was still a mystery. Custine, a *proscrit* of the Reign of Terror. De la Roche, who fell at Austerlitz. All members of the fraternity; and he

alone left to receive the outpourings of a nation's gratitude! His ears still rang with the *vivas* of the excited crowd who were besieging the Hall to catch but a glimpse of their heroic benefactor; his breast heaved with the proudest emotions—not the less that he bore upon it a badge that linked him with patriots living and dead; the precious meed of his devoted generosity. “So should desert in arms be crowned.”

If this paper should be the means of correcting two errors that have crept into both history and biography, it will have served its purpose. One is, that Washington, at any time, looked with disfavour upon the Cincinnati. The other is, that the hereditary succession was ever abolished.

There was much in the character of Washington that, in our age, would be looked upon as eminently aristocratical. His dignified reserve—the graceful courtesy of his manners—the neatness of his toilet—his excessive punctilio. Important communications were returned unopened where his name appeared on the address shorn of its titles. He sealed his letters with the crest and bearings of the Washingtons of Northamptonshire, from whom he traced his descent. At times, he would unbend from his official dignity to any of the elegant amenities of social life. When the allied armies celebrated the birth of the Dauphin at West Point, he led down twenty couples on the green in a country dance.

We must almost look to fiction, and there combine to form the true ideal of the high-minded Virginia gentleman of that day, of which he was the type. The courtly polish

and noble carriage of Grandison grafted upon the stout and stalwart principles, the simplicity of heart and plain exterior of Sir Roger de Coverly, will suggest, in some striking features, a parallel. It is a school that is passed away. It was that period of our history, when an honourable diplomacy abroad, and plain-dealing at home, gave more lustre to the new Republic than even the triumph of her arms. It was the age of Washington and Adams, of Hamilton, of Jay, of Laurens, of Carroll, and Pinckney. Ah! let such of our deluded countrymen as reckon too cheaply their precious birthright, still patiently listen, if they will, to abuse in broken English, heaped upon the traditional policy of the government as enjoined by the "Father of his Country," from the lips of each scheming adventurer, as he feigns some mythical figment of his own, and calls it — Washington!

There was nothing in the tastes or habits of General Washington, that could make him look with displeasure upon an institution founded upon the three virtuous principles of patriotism, honour, and charity. And when he placed his name at the head of it, he expressed himself in terms of unqualified approbation.

The first general meeting, after the disbandment of the army, was held at the State House, Philadelphia, on the 4th of May, 1784. I give an extract from the minutes:

"General Washington having moved that a resolution of the Society, dated at the cantonment of the American army, June 19th, 1783, requesting the Commander-in-Chief to officiate as President-General until the next general meeting of the Society, might be read, and the same being

read accordingly, he laid the original institution of the Society on the table with the official letters which he had written and received in consequence thereof, and retired. General Knox, acting as Secretary-General by the same appointment, also requested leave to retire. Whereupon, the meeting went into a committee of the whole, and General Smallwood took the chair; and on motion it was resolved, that the election of officers of the General Society be for the present postponed. It was then unanimously resolved, that General Washington be requested to preside at this meeting until the whole business of the meeting be duly completed. Messrs. Williams, Dayton, Ramsey, and Turner, were appointed to wait on General Washington, and to inform him of the request of this meeting. General Washington accepted, and took the chair."

"Saturday, May 15th, 1784. Pursuant to the order of the day, proceeded to ballot for officers of the General Society to serve the ensuing term, when: — General Washington was unanimously chosen President, Major-General Gates, Vice-President, and Major-General Knox, Secretary.

In a letter to General Knox, written the following October, and dated at Rocky Hill, Washington says: —

"I am told subscriptions have been paid in by those who wish to have orders. I propose taking seven, for which the money is ready at any time. And it may not be amiss in this place to inform you, that it has always been my intention to present the Society with five hundred dollars."

On the second Monday of May, 1787, was called together at Philadelphia that convention to which we owe the Constitution of the United States—a triumph of wisdom,

and the boast of every true American. It was called with direct reference in respect of time, to the previously appointed meeting of the Cincinnati, to be held on the first Monday of the same month, being the second general meeting of the Society. This was done to give Washington an opportunity of presiding over both sittings.

But he had already written a circular letter to the several State Societies, declining a re-election to the Presidency, giving solely as a reason, a wish to withdraw from all active life, and to devote himself exclusively to the affairs of his farm. He wrote to Mr. Madison, saying, "I declined the Presidency, and excused my attendance on the ground, which is firm and just, of the necessity of attending to my private concerns, and in conformity to my determination of spending the remainder of my days in a state of retirement."

His position was an extremely embarrassing one. The distracted state of the nation called for some great movement to unite the discordant elements. He was once again at a perilous juncture summoned to the aid of his country. But he had already given reasons for not attending the Cincinnati, which would be doubly applicable to the Convention. To use his own words, "it was a delicate, a perplexing subject." The course of a political time-server — the trimmer to all the varying gales of popular favour, whose policy is his best honesty, was a plain one — to rid his skirts of the annoying incumbrance, and to rise sublime over every petty consideration of honour and delicacy. So did not Washington. Divided between contending sentiments, he exhibited a degree of vacillation that was foreign

to his character. He was appealed to by every influence that could move the heart of a patriot, to be present at the Convention. He refused—he accepted—he refused again—and again he accepted.

On the 8th of March, he wrote to General Knox in these words: “I am indirectly and delicately pressed to attend this Convention. Several reasons are opposed to it in my mind, and, not the least, having declined attending the general meeting of the Cincinnati which is to be held in Philadelphia at the same time, on account of the disrespect it might seem to offer to that Society, were I to attend on another occasion.”

On the 28th of the same month, he wrote to Governor Randolph as follows: “If I am able, and should go to Philadelphia, I would set off for that place the 1st or 2d of May, that I might be there to account personally for my conduct to the general meeting of the Cincinnati, which is to convene the first Monday of that month. My feelings would be much hurt if that body should, otherwise, ascribe my attending the one and not the other to a disrespectful inattention to the Society—when the fact is, that I shall ever retain the most lively and affectionate regard for the members of it—on account of their attachment to me, and uniform support upon many trying occasions—as well as on account of their public virtues, patriotism, and sufferings.”

On the 27th of April he had again abandoned all intention of going to Philadelphia, as appears by a letter to the Secretary-General of the Society, and, perhaps, language could not express a greater anxiety not to give

offence. You shall have his own words. It is dated at Mount Vernon :

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“After every consideration my judgment was able to give the subject, I had determined to yield to the wishes of many of my friends, who seemed extremely anxious for my attending the Convention which is proposed to be holden in Philadelphia, the second Monday of May. And tho’ so much afflicted with a rheumatic complaint, (of which I have not been entirely free for six months,) as to be under the necessity of carrying my arm in a sling for the last ten days, I had fixed on Monday next for my departure, and had made every necessary arrangement for the purpose, when, (within this hour) I am summoned by an express, who assures me not a moment is to be lost to see a mother and *only* sister (who are supposed to be in the agonies of death) expire ; and I am hastening to obey this melancholy call, after having just bid an eternal farewell to a much loved brother, who was the intimate companion of my youth, and the most affectionate friend of my ripened age.

“This journey (of more than one hundred miles), in the disordered state of my body, will, I am persuaded, unfit me for the intended trip to Philadelphia, and assuredly prevent me from offering that tribute of respect to my compatriots in arms, which results from affection and gratitude for their attachment to, and support of me, upon so many trying occasions.

“For this purpose it was, as I had, tho’ with a good deal of reluctance, consented (from a conviction that our affairs

were verging fast to ruin, to depart from the resolution I had taken, of never more stepping out of the walks of private life,) to serve in this Convention, that I determined to show my respect to the general meeting of the Society, by coming to Philadelphia during its sitting. As the latter is prevented, and the highest probability is, the other will not take place, I send such papers as have, from time to time, come to my hands, and may require inspection, and the consideration of the Cincinnati, to your care."

The whole of the preceding paragraph, as you will observe, is somewhat involved. Interlineations and erasures, made both with the knife and the pen, clearly show the perplexity of the writer. He concludes in these words:

"I make a tender of my affectionate regards to the members who may constitute the General Meeting of the Society, and with sentiments of the highest esteem,

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Your obdt. humble servant,

"To MAJ.-GEN. KNOX.

GO. WASHINGTON."

Finally, on the 13th of May, the day before the assembling of the Convention, General Washington arrived in Philadelphia. The Cincinnati was still in session. It had adjourned from the State-House to Carpenter's Hall, in order to give way to the larger and more important body. Here he found himself once more surrounded by his former companions of the field. Four years had elapsed since he had pledged them an eternal remembrance, in that most touching and trying scene, his affec-

tionate farewell. The old feeling revived. He shook hands with General Knox. He exchanged friendly greetings with Hamilton, Varnum, Jackson, Humphreys, Carrington, Mifflin, and Boudinot.

"Will you be our next President?" was put to him on every side.

"I will!" said Washington; and, on the 18th of the same month, he was unanimously re-elected President-General of the Society of the Cincinnati — a position that he held until the day of his death.

In 1788 (five years after the formation of the Society) he wrote to Mr. Barton in this wise — a letter which, if written in our country at the present day, by any public man, would be fatal to his prospects :

"It is far from my design," he says, "to intimate an opinion that heraldry, coat armour, etc., might not be rendered conducive to public and private uses with us, or that they can have any tendency unfriendly to the purest spirit of republicanism. * * * *

"While the minds of a certain portion of the community (probably from turbulent or sinister views) are or affect to be haunted with the very spectre of innovation; while they are indefatigably striving to make the credulity of the less-informed part of the citizens subservient to their schemes, in believing that the proposed General Government is pregnant with the seeds of discrimination, oligarchy, and despotism; while they are clamorously endeavouring to propagate an idea that those whom they wish invidiously to designate by the name of the 'well-

born,' are meditating to distinguish themselves from their compatriots, and to wrest the dearest privileges from the bulk of the people, [I think it impolitic to agitate any subject that may tend to promote these feelings.] * * *

"I make these observations with the greater freedom, because I have once been a witness to what I conceived to have been a most unreasonable prejudice against an innocent institution—I mean the *Society of the Cincinnati*. I was conscious that my own proceedings on the subject were immaculate. I was also convinced that the members, actuated by motives of sensibility, charity, and patriotism, were doing a laudable thing in erecting that memorial of their common services, sufferings, and friendships."

Six months after the date of this letter, General Washington was unanimously elected first President of what might then be called for the first time the *United States*.

On this occasion a committee was appointed, in the name of the Society, to present a congratulatory address. This is his reply:

"Although it is easier for you to conceive than for me to explain the pleasing sensations which have been excited in my breast by *your* congratulations on my appointment to the head of this rising Republic, yet I must take the liberty to thank you sincerely for the polite manner in which you felicitate our countrymen, and testify your regard to me, on this occasion. * * * *

"The candour of your fellow-citizens acknowledges the patriotism of your conduct in peace, as their gratitude has

declared their obligations for your fortitude and perseverance in war. A knowledge that they now do justice to the purity of your intentions, ought to be your highest consolation, as the fact is demonstrative of your greatest glory. * * * *

“Whatever titles my military services may have given me to the regard of my country, they are principally conducted by the firm support of my brave and faithful associates in the field. And if any consideration is to be attributed to the successful exercise of my civil duties, it proceeds in a great measure from the wisdom of the laws, and the facility which the disposition of my fellow-citizens has given to their administration.

“To the most affectionate wishes for your temporal happiness, I add a fervent prayer for your eternal felicity.

“GO. WASHINGTON.”

Even amidst the cares and responsibilities of an office new to himself and the world at large, we find him at times occupied with the concerns of the Cincinnati. I will read you a curious letter communicated by Washington from the *ci-devant* Viscount de Noailles, then a member of the National Assembly, and a violent Jacobin. It will show the estimation in which the Society was held in France, at the time of the Revolution. The English, as you will perceive, is his own. It is dated Paris, April 24th, 1790.

“DEAR GENERAL:—I have, though remote, incessantly borne you that share of admiration you have filled every

Frenchman's breast with who has marched under your colours. It is not only now with a spirit replete with freedom that I durst address you, but partaking of all the rights nature has reserved to mankind and America has reaped the first benefits of. In the French Revolution, which portends the greatest blessings, almost all those who have beheld the foundation of liberty in the United Provinces, have brought from thence of American spirit, and have displayed it with undaunted courage, as they have had a hand in preparing the Revolution, so are they doomed in firmly supporting its establishment. Such a brotherhood has been of the utmost help, and will be our greatest prop. It is in your power to contribute to its indissolubility by a deed both equitable and useful. The national dignities are the only badges we set a value on, and are willing to preserve. The Cross of St. Louis, the sign of military service, is going to be conferred throughout all the ranks of the army. Condescend in granting the same favour on all the officers who have been under your orders, and who have contributed as well as we to the salvation of the commonwealth. Condescend to obtain for them the right of bearing the Order of Cincinnati. We shall hold the dearer when we behold our brethren dignified with it. Fill up their vow and our own. It is in the name of the small army you had some esteem for I durst petition the favour. It is granting us a second reward, of having our fellow at arms honoured as well as we with a benefaction that evinces that liberty has been laboured for. Such a bounty were less pleasing, and were perhaps impossible in experiencing its influence, if

you were not so generous as to diffuse it over all those who are entitled to it.

“The deliberation to be held on this request is that the officers of the French army who were in America at the time M. de Rochambeau left the continent to repair to the Leeward Islands, as also those of the legion of Lauzun be indulged with the leave of bearing the Order of Cincinnatus, provided they give an unexceptionable testimony of their service, and obtain a certificate of their corps, revised and signed by General Rochambeau.

“Numbers of French officers have brought from the American war but scars. They will receive an healing remedy when they have an additional proof of their service.

“I have the honour to be with respect, dear General, your most humble and obedient servt.

“NOAILLES—a member of the National Assembly.”

At the death of General Washington, which clouded the dawn of the 19th century, indications of grief were exhibited throughout the land—I may say throughout the civilized globe. But from no body of men did there flow a more genuine feeling of heart-felt affliction, than from his brothers of the Cincinnati. The returns of the several State Societies at this time are black with obituary notices—every honorary tribute of affection was paid to the memory of their late President. He was succeeded by Alexander Hamilton. After him came Charles Cotesworth Pinckney.

Thus much for the relations that subsisted between General Washington and the Society of the Cincinnati.

The hereditary succession was never abandoned. A recommendation to that effect was indeed made to the several State Societies, at the first General Meeting in Philadelphia, in the words of the circular letter: "To remove every cause of inquietude, to annihilate every source of jealousy, and to designate explicitly the ground on which they stood." But the proposition, unwillingly urged, was accepted in deprecatory terms by some, and by others it was totally rejected. Pennsylvania accepted; but, in an address to the General Society, expressed the opinion "that the ground of the Society had been too much narrowed, and that, without some further alterations, the Society itself must necessarily in the course of a few years, reach its final period." To overcome the difficulty, in this State they resort to the formality of an election. But the candidates are limited to the descendants of the first members, according to the terms of the original institution.

The New York Society resolved "that because the alterations contained no certain provision for the continuance of the Society beyond the lives of the present members, it would be inexpedient to adopt them." The more fully to express their views, a remonstrance was drawn up, whence I will read you a passage, the eloquence of which betrays the hand of Hamilton, whose name is at the head of the committee appointed for that purpose:

"To men whose views are not unfriendly to those principles which form the basis of the Union, and the only sure foundation of the tranquillity and happiness of this country, it can never appear criminal, that a class of citizens

who have had so conspicuous an agency in the American Revolution as those who compose the Society of the Cincinnati, should pledge themselves to each other, in a voluntary association, to support, by all the means consistent with the laws, that noble Fabric of United Independence, which at so much hazard, and with so many sacrifices, they have contributed to erect; a Fabric on the solidity and duration of which the value of all they have done must depend! and America can never have cause to condemn an Institution calculated to give energy and extent to a sentiment favourable to the preservation of that union, by which she established her liberties, and to which she must owe her future peace, respectability, and prosperity. Experience, we doubt not, will teach her, that the members of the Cincinnati, always actuated by the same virtuous and generous motives which have hitherto directed their conduct, will pride themselves in being, thro' every vicissitude of her future fate, the steady and faithful supporters of her liberties, her laws, and her government."

New Hampshire and New Jersey indulged in this pleasant piece of sophistry:

"If medals only can create an order of nobility, Congress has already ennobled many of their own and even foreign officers, in bestowing medals on them for brilliant services. But perhaps it may be said the difference lies in the descent; if this proves anything, it proves that the descent of a medal ennobles a descendant, which has no such effect on his ancestor, and is an argument too feeble to deserve a serious refutation."

At the Second General Meeting, it was resolved "that the alterations could not take effect until they had been agreed to by all the State Societies." They never were so agreed to, and consequently the original Institution remains in full force. Those Societies that accepted the proposed alterations unconditionally, of course perished with their own generation.

It remains for me to be briefly statistical. But six of the original thirteen States now respond to the triennial call of the Secretary-General. They are Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and of course South Carolina.

The 268 officers of the Pennsylvania line who signed the original institution, are now represented by about 60 of their descendants. Of the New York line, 230 signed the original institution: they are represented by 73 of their descendants. The Society of Massachusetts has always been the largest, 333 having originally signed the institution, now represented by upwards of 100 members. These three States, assumed as a standard, will sufficiently show the danger accruing to the perpetuity of the Society from too strict an observance of the hereditary principle.

The next General Meeting will be held in Charleston, S. C.; when that article of their constitution which expresses "an unalterable determination to promote and cherish between the respective States that union so essential to their happiness," will be the prevailing sentiment. The spirit of their fathers will be revived among men of influence in the land, and the hospitalities extended on the occasion will not be the least among the harmonizing

weights in that delicately-hung balance where so many rival interests agitate the scales.

The pensioners are few in number. The funds of the Pennsylvania Society carry cheerfulness to the hearths of about twenty families. The other Societies probably disburse in a similar proportion. The little annuities that are paid over are not looked upon in the nature of alms, but rather as the right of the participants. It is the one month's pay of their ancestors, hardly earned and grudgingly doled out to them, now returned with increase after many days.

Of those generous hearts who had this tender regard for their posterity, not one survives! The last veteran is gone! and, so far as relates to the founders of an honourable fraternity, the living source of all traditional reminiscence is forever closed. On the 29th of November, 1854 (five weeks ago), died Major Robert Burnett, the last survivor of the original Cincinnati. He died at his residence, near Newburgh, hard by the spot where, seventy years ago, he entered into a conspiracy that was destined to cramp the energies of the growing Republic. The scene where accents of an eternal farewell were wrung from many a warm and manly heart. He lived to see the place become a mart of traffic, busy with the hum of life, and trade's unfeeling train sweep by to dispossess it of every hallowed association. He lived to see the Cincinnati the graceful embodiment, the sign and symbol, the outward exponent, the seal and impress of the American Revolution — an object of veneration to a few; to the many scarce the shadow of a name! Such are the mutations of time!

When General St. Clair and Colonel Sargent gave the name of their favourite Society to the three block-houses that formed a settlement then called Losanteville, at the confluence of the Licking and the Ohio, they little thought they were enthroning a "Queen of the West," and erecting a monument which will probably outlive all recollection of the object it commemorates. And even now, perhaps, not one in a thousand of the active and enterprising citizens of that thrifty "locality," as he brands his barrels of "prime middlings," or stencils the covers of his "sugar-cured hams," or pastes the label upon bottles of "sparkling Catawba," dreams for a moment that he is spreading over this and other lands the name of an association that, at one time, in the apprehension of many sensible people, threatened the liberties of his country.

JOURNAL
OF
THE GENERAL MEETING
OF
THE CINCINNATI
IN 1784.

BY MAJOR WINTHROP SARGENT,

A DELEGATE FROM MASSACHUSETTS.

Now First Printed.

P R E F A C E.

THE original MS. of the following Journal was found by the editor among the papers of the late Governor Sargent; and at the suggestion of some friends who considered its historical interest, when taken in connection with the little that seems to be generally known respecting the Society to which it refers, as of sufficient importance to warrant such a step, it has been prepared for the press.

The writer was born at Gloucester, Massachusetts, May 1st, 1753; graduated with distinction at Harvard college; and enlisted in the American army, then besieging Boston, on the 7th of July, 1775. He declined a company in several of the marching regiments; and on March 16th, 1776, was appointed eighth Captain-Lieutenant of Knox's regiment of artillery, as appears by the muster-roll in the Knox MSS. In this line he served through the Revolutionary war "with great reputation," according to Washington, who had "a high opinion of his worth;" and gradually rose to a Majority. The principal actions in which he bore a part, were the

siege of Boston ; the battle of Long Island, and the operations that attended the retreat from New York ; the affairs at White Plains, Trenton, and Princeton ; that of Brandywine, Germantown, and Barren Hill ; of Valley Forge, and Monmouth, &c. In 1785, General Washington wrote of him, "that he entered into the service of his country at an early period of the war, and during the continuance of it, displayed a zeal, integrity, and intelligence, which did honour to him as an officer and a gentleman." For many years after the war, he filled various offices of dignity, both civil and military. In 1791, Colonel Sargent was Adjutant-General at St. Clair's defeat, where he was severely wounded. Two bullets that he received on that day were never extracted, and were carried in his body through the rest of his life. He was afterwards Governor of the Mississippi Territory, where he died in 1820.

In the affairs of the Society of the Cincinnati, Major Sargent had taken, in common with hundreds of other officers, a great interest. The decoration of the Order appears in Stuart's portrait of him, as it does in those of most members who sat to that artist. From his intimacy with Knox, Putnam, Howe, Shaw, and others among the framers of the Institution, it is probable that he possessed a full knowledge of all that it was designed to accomplish ; but if this was anything more than what is ex-

pressed on the face of that instrument, he has left us no indication of it. It is not intended here to go over the history of the formation of the Cincinnati, and the clamours that were raised against it. Mr. Alexander Johnston, in his paper before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, has referred to all this in a manner that leaves nothing to be said in this place on the subjects he has treated of. But, having at various times given some attention to the matter, the editor begs leave to suggest one or two points that have occurred to him.

In an article in the *North American Review* for October, 1853, the present writer, following Marshall and Sparks, expressed the belief, that the idea of the Society was first suggested by Knox; and that the Baron de Steuben probably had at least been consulted in the inception of the scheme. He has since been favoured with the perusal of the original rough draft of the Society, in the handwriting of Knox, and dated at West Point, April 15th, 1783, being considerably antecedent to the meeting of the officers, May 10th, 1783; which gives us the earliest intimation we have of the formation of the Cincinnati. This paper, with several others from the same source, as yet unknown to the press, the editor hopes ere long to receive permission to make use of; in which event, they will appear in an appendix to this tract. And though there is no

evidence of the fact, beyond the assertions of its enemies, he supposes it not improbable, that one benefit proposed to be attained by the officers in thus banding themselves together, may have been an increased capacity to resist the threatened oppression of that Government they had themselves created; and to enforce more successfully an audience of their claims for payment of their lawfully earned dues. So far as this goes, and even this is purely conjectural, the combination may perhaps have been political. But, as for the creation and hereditary transmission of a distinctive badge of their Order, it amounted in reality to nothing more than the expression of that desire for glory which is the breath of a soldier's nostrils. In all ages, such personal distinctions have been the temptation to lure men into perils, for which mere gold could yield no compensation.

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the soldier's prize,
The soldier's wealth is honour.

A statue in the Comitium, or a mural crown, would lead the Roman veteran through flood and flame; the crusader's cross-legged effigy, even in death, preserved the memories of Acre and "the listed field at Askalon;" and a ribbon of the Legion of Honour atoned to the followers of Napo-

leon for the poisoned heats of Egypt, and all the frozen horrors of the North. It is not then strange that, seeing their enemies daily rewarded with like trophies by the King of England, and listening to the nightly aspirations of their allies for the cross of St. Louis, the appropriate reward of French prowess, the American soldier should have sighed in his turn for some like distinction. That it was a claim to public consideration to have served with honour in the ranks of the Revolution, is evident from the warmth with which the Order itself was inveighed against and defended : and that it should have been made hereditary might have been excused by the plea that there was little likelihood of most of the members being ever able to leave much else to their children. But it seems more than probable, that the first defined suggestion of the assumption of a distinctive Order, came from Steuben, or some other foreigner. This idea is hinted at in a sharp letter from Lafayette to John Adams, of 8th of March, 1784. (Life and Works of Adams, viii., p. 187.) Remarking on certain animadversions upon the Society attributed to Mr. Adams, in which it was styled a *French blessing*, Lafayette says, the French court had not, so far as he knew, even dreamed of the Society, before Count de Rochambeau was written to by General Washington. But the constant association of

French officers, bearing the Order of St. Louis, with the Americans, must have occasioned many suggestions for the creation of another military Order; and it is not incredible, that the "considerable resemblance," noted by Macaulay, between a rule of the Order of St. Louis and that ordained by the Censors for the Roman knights in the age of Cincinnatus, occurring to some well-read *chevalier des ordres du Roy*, of Rochambeau's camp, may have given a spur to the comparison which fixed the name of the Society of the Cincinnati.

However this be, it is to Knox that the first development of the scheme is to be ascribed: "ever noted for generous impulses," says Mr. Irving, he "suggested, as a mode of perpetuating the friendships thus formed, and keeping alive the brotherhood of the camp, the formation of a society composed of the officers of the army. The suggestion met with universal concurrence, and the hearty approbation of Washington." Rochambeau, indeed, attributes a greater share in its creation than mere approval to the illustrious Chief. After stating that the army, threatened with being turned adrift unpaid and penniless, was ripe for revolt, he continues: "Le général Washington, conservant ce caractère noble et patriotique qui a toujours fait la base de sa conduite, ramena les esprits au sentimens de générosité qui les avoient animés dans

le cours de la revolution. Il fit proposer l'institution de la société de Cincinnatus, pour perpétuer la mémoire de l'alliance de la France, comme un lien éternel de leur confraternité mutuelle, et la marque honorable de leurs services." (*Mémoires*, i., p. 321). But this language is too general to testify to more than the Count's opinion as to the cause of its creation : the question of its paternity must remain as given by Irving.

On May 10th, 1783, a meeting of the officers was held at the cantonment on Hudson's river, and certain proposals for the Society considered. These proposals were probably those contained in Knox's rough draft of April 15th, already alluded to. They were amended, and referred for revision to a committee, of whom one was Captain Shaw, General Knox's aide ; and the form of institution, as reported by them on the 13th of May, being agreed to, it has continued ever since in force. Mr. Quincy, in his *Life of Shaw*, who was secretary of the committee, reports on the authority of Colonel Pickering, the fact, that the original draft of the constitution of the Society was from Shaw's pen. This probably refers to the Institution as adopted ; with the particulars of which the reader may readily acquaint himself, by recourse to the official publications of the Society. Under its regulations, the first general

meeting was not to be held until May, 1784: and a meeting of persons properly authorized was therefore held on June 19th, 1783, to choose temporary officers. An ominous foreboding of ill might have been gathered from the place of assembly—the new building at the cantonments having been struck by lightning a few nights before during a violent storm, and its flagstaff shivered. Certainly a storm of another kind was already brewing against the Cincinnati. Even among the officers themselves, it had opponents, who refused to join its ranks on account of its anti-democratic character. General Heath tells us that he hung back for some time, and only came in, lest it should be said to his posterity, that their ancestor was guilty of some misconduct which deprived him of his badge. But the prevailing wishes of the officers were in its favour.

Far different was the feeling in other quarters. The opinion of Mr. Adams, that the formation of the Society was “the first step taken to deface the beauty of our temple of liberty,” found a wider concurrence than most of that gentleman’s sentiments were fated to encounter. As the year rolled on, the public uneasiness was increased by the appeals of the press: and the general meeting of May, 1784, was looked to with an interest second only, if at all, to that inspired by the coming

together of the Congress. Mr. Irving thus relates the occurrence in his *Life of Washington*. (IV. p. 454.)

“The time was now approaching when the first general meeting of the Order of Cincinnati was to be held, and Washington saw with deep concern a popular jealousy awakened concerning it. Judge Burke, of South Carolina, had denounced it in a pamphlet as an attempt to elevate the military above the civil classes, and to institute an order of nobility. The Legislature of Massachusetts sounded an alarm that was echoed in Connecticut, and prolonged from State to State. The whole Union was put on its guard against this effort to form an hereditary aristocracy out of the military chiefs and powerful families of the several States.

“Washington endeavoured to allay this jealousy. In his letters to the President of the State Societies, notifying the meeting which was to be held in Philadelphia on the 1st of May, he expressed his earnest solicitude that it should be respectable for numbers and abilities, and wise and deliberate in its proceedings, so as to convince the public that the objects of the Institution were patriotic and praiseworthy.

“The Society met at the appointed time and place. Washington presided, and by his sagacious counsels effected modifications of its constitution.

The hereditary principle, and the power of electing honorary members, were abolished, and it was reduced to the harmless, but highly respectable footing on which it still exists.

“In notifying the French military and naval officers included in the Society, of the changes which had taken place in its constitution, he expressed his ardent hopes that it would render permanent those friendships and connections which had happily taken root between the officers of the two nations. All clamours against the Order now ceased. It became a rallying place for old comrades in arms, and Washington continued to preside over it until his death.”

In this statement, Mr. Irving only follows Marshall, Sparks, Guizot, Hildreth, C. F. Adams, and other writers; and not unnaturally falls into the same conclusions. The general meeting of 1784 undoubtedly did attempt to modify the Institution; but it could do no more than recommend the acceptance of these alterations to the several State Societies. The assent of all the States was necessary before they could take effect, and that assent was never given: wherefore the Society stands now on the same footing that it did on its organization.

The meeting of 1784 was undoubtedly looked to with a great interest; and the fact that the essential parts of the Journal which follows were written in

cypher, shows very clearly that the men who sate in that council were not willing the public should penetrate their secrets. A few years later, the guillotine was the penalty inflicted by the sister republic for the crime of membership. No such state of things could have been contemplated in 1784: but there was undoubtedly a general jealousy of the Society. What transpired in its meeting may probably be recorded in its archives: but in no other place is there reason to suppose any account exists of the proceedings on that occasion, save in this Journal. The reader will perceive that it is written freely, and without the formal precision of a clerk: perhaps it is none the less interesting on that score. The spelling of some of the French names may also be noticed as an example of the lack of colloquial familiarity between the two nations at that day. The Count de Rochambeau himself affords a case of compensation; in whose Memoirs of our war one is sometimes puzzled to recognize in Heats, Trumboldt, Vaine, Ohera, and Cabb, the men we name Heath, Trumbull, Wayne, O'Hara, and the Baron de Kalb.

The meeting of the Society was called for Monday, May 1st, 1784. Probably, nothing was done on that day, as the Journal commences on Tuesday, May 2nd. It terminates abruptly on May 18th;

about which time therefore, it is likely that the meeting finally adjourned. It is understood that the Society of the Cincinnati has in contemplation the preparation, from its own archives, of a history that will doubtless be clear and full on many points wherein this editor is necessarily uninformed. Such a work cannot but be a most acceptable contribution to our historical literature. In the mean time, it is hoped that the notes, imperfect as many of them are, appended to this publication, may not be criticised with too severe eyes; and that the history of the meeting of 1784, now for the first time made generally known, may possess some interest for the inquirer into that period of the history of America and of Washington. The position assumed by the Chief on this occasion has often been declared by his biographers; but the concurrent testimony of one of his most devoted followers, given with that simplicity and frankness, characteristic of a soldier's private diary, places his willingness to yield to the tide of popular opinion, in a very strong light. For the well-being of the Cincinnati, as well as for other causes, the editor is not dissatisfied that those efforts should have failed of entire success.

WINTHROP SARGENT.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 15, 1857.

Journal of the Cincinnati.

1784.

TUESDAY, the 4th of May, 1784. Assembled at the City Tavern,¹ and, after choosing a Committee of Three, to examine the credentials of gentlemen who should present themselves as delegates to the General Meeting, adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

[May 5th, 1784.] Convened at nine: received the report of the Committee, as follows:

Properly elected for

NEW HAMPSHIRE:

HENRY DEARBORN;²

¹ The City Tavern, in Second, near the corner of Walnut street, was then one of the chief public-houses of Philadelphia.

² Col. Henry Dearborn (*b.* 1751; *d.* 1829) was Secretary at War from 1801 to 1809, and, during the war of 1812, commander-in-chief of the army.

MASSACHUSETTS:

HENRY KNOX;²DAVID COBB;³RUFUS PUTNAM;⁴WILLIAM HULL;⁵

WINTHROP SARGENT;

¹ Of the Massachusetts Society, Knox thus writes to Washington, from Boston, Feb. 21, 1784: "The Cincinnati appears, however groundlessly, to be an object of jealousy. The idea is that it has been created by a foreign influence, in order to change our forms of government. * * * * The cool, dispassionately sensible men seem to approve of the institution generally, but dislike the hereditary descent. The two branches of the Legislature of this State, namely, the Assembly and Senate, have chosen a committee 'to inquire into any associations or combinations to introduce undue distinctions into the community, and which may have a tendency to create a race of hereditary nobility, contrary to the confederation of the United States, and the spirit of the Constitution of this Commonwealth.' They have not yet reported, and perhaps will not. The same sentiments pervade New England. The Society here have had a respectable meeting at Boston, on the 10th inst., at which Gen. Lincoln presided. Gen. Heath was not present. A Committee was chosen to attend the General Meeting at Philadelphia, next May—Gen. R. Putnam, Col. Cobb, Lieut.-Col. Hull, Major Sargent, and myself. Probably only two will attend. It was thought prudent not to make any honorary members at present. The officers and soldiers conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, and are generally as industrious as any part of the community." (Corr. of Rev. ed. Sparks; iv. 58.)

² Major-General Knox, the friend of Washington (*b.* 1750; *d.* 1806). From 1783 to 1800, he was Secretary of the General Society, and in 1805 was elected its Vice-President. His biography is now being written by Mr. Willard, of Boston.

³ Lieut.-Col. Cobb was in 1809 Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, and died in 1828.

⁴ Brig.-Gen. Rufus Putnam (*b.* 1738; *d.* 1824) was one of the founders of the State of Ohio, where he filled many important offices. (See Burnet's *Northwestern Territory*, p. 43.)

⁵ Lieut.-Col. Hull, whose unfortunate part in the war of 1812 is well known. The connection of Dearborn and Bloomfield, two of his brother

RHODE ISLAND:

NATH'L GREENE;¹JAMES VERNOM;²JEREMIAH OLNEY;³

DANIEL LYMAN;

SAMUEL WARD;

CONNECTICUT:

SAMUEL H. PARSONS;⁴JEDEDIAH HUNTINGTON;⁵

HEMAN SWIFT;

members, with the court-martial that sentenced him to be "shot to death," is curious. In Clarke's Hull, this General Meeting is mentioned, but no particulars are given of the "interesting business which had called them together."

¹ Two years later this good man and skilful soldier died in Georgia, where, invited by an exhibition of popular affection and gratitude not less laudable than rare, he had selected his abode.

² Probably Major-General James Mitchell Varnum, one of the first settlers of Ohio, who died in 1789.

³ Colonel Olney had served with distinction through the war, in the line of Rhode Island. After its close, he was the President of the Cincinnati of that State, and Collector of the Customs at Providence, for many years, in times when Federal offices were the rewards of merit. He died Nov. 10, 1812, in his 63d year, leaving a reputation for worth as unblemished as unusual. (See also Rogers's Am. Biog., and Coll. R. I. Hist. Soc., vol. v.)

⁴ Major-General Samuel Holden Parsons: born May 14, 1737; died at Big Beaver Creek, in the Northwestern Territory, Nov. 17, 1789. A contemporaneous MS. says: "He was drowned in attempting to come down that river (and perhaps near the Falls) in a canoe, with one man. His family have suffered a severe loss, for tho' in years, and thereby impaired in his capacities, he still retained the ability to have rendered them important services."

⁵ Brig.-Gen. Jedediah Huntington: *b.* May 15, 1743; *d.* Sept. 25, 1818.

DAVID HUMPHREYS;¹JONATHAN TRUMBULL;²NEW YORK:³PHILIP CORTLAND;⁴WM. S. SMITH;⁵

¹ Col. David Humphreys, as well known by his civil, military, and diplomatic services, as by his ready pen, was born in 1752, and died in 1818.

² Mr. Trumbull was, in 1775, "appointed by Congress paymaster in the Northern Department, and, soon after, secretary and aid to General Washington." Entering into the civil service of the State, he was, in 1791, chosen Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives; in 1794 he was elected to the Senate; and, in 1798, chosen Governor of Connecticut, to which post he was annually re-elected until his death, in 1809. (Alden's *N. E. Biog.*, p. 397; Barber's *Hist. Coll. Conn.*, p. 322.)

³ Respecting this delegation, I find the following passage on page 24 of "The Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati," etc. Published by order and for the use of the members in the State of New York (New York: printed by Samuel Loudon, 1784), among the proceedings of the New York Society, on Feb. 9, 1784: "On motion, Resolved, That the Society proceed immediately to the choice of three Deputies, to represent them at the meeting of the General Society, any two of whom shall be a representation. The ballots being then taken, Brigadier-General *Cortlandt*, Lieutenant-Colonel *Smith*, and Lieutenant-Colonel *Fish*, were elected."

⁴ Brig.-Gen. Philip Van Cortlandt died at his seat in Westchester county, New York, Nov. 5, 1831, in his 82d year. He served with credit from the beginning to the end of the Revolutionary War, and, among many other battles, had the fortune to share in the glories of Saratoga and Yorktown. After the war, he represented his district in Congress for nearly twenty years; and to his death "possessed the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens." I find this gentleman's name generally spelt at the time, by strangers, as in the text. From 1783 to 1788 he was Treasurer of the Cincinnati of New York.

⁵ Lieut.-Col. Wm. S. Smith was Secretary of the New York Society from 1790 to 1793, and again in 1803; in 1794 he was chosen its Vice-President, and in 1804 its President. He died June 10, 1816.

NICHOLAS FISH;¹

JAMES FAIRLIE;²

NEW JERSEY:

ELIAS DAYTON;³

DAVID BREARLY;⁴

JONATHAN DAYTON;⁵

AARON OGDEN;⁶

PENNSYLVANIA:

JOHN DICKINSON;⁷

¹ Lieut.-Col. Nicholas Fish, of the 2d N. Y. Regiment, was the first Assistant Treasurer of the New York Society; in 1795 its Vice-President; and in 1797 its President. He died in New York, June 20, 1833, aged 75 years. His son, Gov. Hamilton Fish, is the existing President-General of the Society.

² Major James Fairlie, "of facetious memory," was a lieutenant in the 2d N. Y. Regiment, and A. D. C. to the Baron de Steuben. He served with distinction in the war, and is mentioned in Heath's Memoirs, p. 230. He was Secretary of the New York Society in 1784, and Assistant Treasurer in 1805. Mr. Irving (Washington, iv. 475) records that Washington, while on a water party, was so overcome by the drollery of one of Major Fairlie's stories, "that he fell back in the boat in a paroxysm of laughter." Fairlie died Oct. 11, 1830.

³ Brig.-Gen. Elias Dayton, of the New Jersey line: died in 1807, aged 70 years.

⁴ Lieut.-Col. David Brearly was a member of the State and Federal Conventions, and for nine years Chief-Justice of New Jersey. He died Aug. 16, 1790, in his 45th year. (Barber and Howe; Hist. Coll. N. J., p. 303.)

⁵ Jonathan Dayton, afterwards speaker of the House, in Congress, and godfather of Dayton, Ohio.

⁶ Captain Ogden was afterwards a Senator in Congress; in 1813 was made a major-general, but declined the office; Vice-President-General in 1825; and President-General from 1822 to his death, in 1839.

⁷ John Dickinson, Governor of Pennsylvania, and the fourth hono-

STEPHEN MOYLAN;¹
 THOMAS ROBINSON;²
 THOMAS B. BOWEN;³
 ABRAHAM G. CLAYPOLE;⁴

DELAWARE:

JAMES TILTON;⁵
 JAMES MOORE;⁶

MARYLAND:

WILLIAM SMALLWOOD;⁷
 OTHO H. WILLIAMS;⁸
 NATH'L RAMSAY;
 WM. PACA;⁹

rary member of the Cincinnati of that State: *b.* 1732; *d.* 1808. For a sketch of his character, see Flanders's Chief-Justices of the United States, i. 137.

¹ Brig.-Gen. Moylan, a native of Ireland, was colonel of the 4th Light Dragoons: in 1800 Vice-President of the Pennsylvania Society.

² Lieut.-Col. Robinson, of the 2d Penna. Regt., a native of Ireland.

³ Captain Thomas Bartholomew Bowen, of the 1st Penna. Regt., was at one time a member of the South Carolina Society.

⁴ Captain Claypoole, of the 3d Penna. Regt.

⁵ Dr. James Tilton was born in 1745; was physician and Surgeon-General of the army in the war of 1812; and died in Delaware in 1822.

⁶ Major Moore was in 1800 Assistant Treasurer of the Pennsylvania Society.

⁷ Major-General Smallwood, Governor of Maryland in 1785, and President of the State Cincinnati; *d.* 1792. Several letters concerning the meeting of 1784 are given in the Maryland Papers of the Seventy-six Society.

⁸ Brig.-Gen. Williams: *b.* 1748; *d.* 1794.

⁹ Gov. Paca was a signer of the Declaration, and Governor and Chief-Justice of Maryland: *b.* 1740; *d.* 1799.

VIRGINIA:

GEORGE WHEEDON;¹

WM. HETH;

HENRY LEE;²JAMES WOOD;³

NORTH CAROLINA:

READING BLOUNT;⁴ARCHIBALD LYGHTE;⁵GRIFFITH J. M'KEE;⁶

SOUTH CAROLINA:

WM. WASHINGTON;⁷

¹ Brig.-Gen. Weedon, before the war, was an innkeeper at Fredericksburg, Virginia.

² Afterwards Governor Lee, originator of the phrase which names Washington as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Born, 1756; died in 1818, of wounds received from a mob of political opponents at Baltimore, in 1812. (Howe's Hist. Coll. Va., 511.)

³ Col. Wood was afterwards Governor of Virginia; in whose honor is named Wood county; died 1813.

⁴ Reading Blount was captain in the North Carolina line in 1776. (Wheeler's N. C., i. 80.)

⁵ Wheeler says Archibald Lytle was a captain of the N. C. line in 1776.

⁶ Griffith John M'Kee; b. in North Carolina in 1753; major and bvt. lt.-col. in revolutionary army; capt. artillery and engineers, June 2, 1794; resigned April 24, 1798. Collector of Wilmington, N. C., April, 1798. Died Oct. 3, 1801. (Gardner's Army Dict.; Wheeler's N. C.)

⁷ Lieut.-Col. Wm. A. Washington, of the South Carolina line. From 1798 to 1800 he held a brigadier's commission in the Federal army; died 1810.

WALTON WHITE;¹LEWIS MORRIS;²GEORGE TURNER;³

GEORGIA:

JOHN S. EUSTACE;⁴

ALEX'R D. CUTHBERT;

JOHN LUCAS;

JAMES FEILDS.

General Washington, President-General,⁵ and General Knox, Treasurer, begged leave to resign their offices. The President was then requested to resume his seat, as a temporary appointment, for the whole business of this General Meeting; and Major Turner was desired to attend to the duty of scribe:—After which, we resolved ourselves into a committee of the whole, Col. Ramsay in

¹ Col. Anthony Walton White, of the 1st Light Dragoons, seems to have been originally a member of the South Carolina Society, and afterwards of that of New York. Gardner (Army Dict.) says he was of Virginia, and brigadier from 1798 to 1800. He died Feb. 10, 1803.

² Lieut.-Col. Lewis Morris was an original member of the Society of South Carolina, to which State he had probably removed from New York.

³ Major Turner was a captain in the South Carolina line. In 1787 he was Assistant Secretary of the General Society; and in after years, I think, a Federal judge in the Northwestern Territory.

⁴ Major John Skey Eustace, who had settled in Georgia at the close of the war. In 1794 he went abroad, and rose to be a major-general in the French service; commanding a division in Flanders in 1794. He returned to New York in 1800, and died at Newburgh in 1805.

⁵ From the foundation of this Order to the end of his life, Washington continued its head. He had arrived in Philadelphia from Mount Vernon, to attend this meeting, on Saturday, May 1, 1784.

the chair, and the Institution was read, agreeably to the general resolution.

The President then arose;—express'd the opposition of the State of Virginia and other States;—observ'd that it had become violent and formidable, and called for serious consideration;—desired of the members of the several States to declare the ideas which prevailed in their countries with regard to our Institution, and the various manners which they had pursued to obtain this knowledge.¹

Connecticut, by Colonel Humphreys;—a very general disapprobation of the People.

Massachusetts, by General Knox;—expressed similar sentiments—with this difference, that some very sincerely wish its existence, but with alterations material.²

¹ On the 8th April, 1784, Washington had written to Jefferson, "inquiring into the real state of public opinion, as well as the sentiments of Congress," on the subject of the Cincinnati. Jefferson replied at great length, decidedly opposing the Society as then constituted, and reciting with much force the usual objections against it. He gives his impression that the Congress was unfavourable to it, and that although they might not express their sentiments unless forced to do so, they would probably "check it by side blows whenever it came in their way; and in competitions for office, on equal, or nearly equal grounds, would give silent preferences to those who are not of the fraternity." He concludes with the opinion that if it was intended to continue the Society, it would be better to make no application to Congress; and that no modification of it would be unobjectionable, except that which would "amount to annihilation;" for such would be the effect of parting with its inheritability, its organization, and its assemblies. (Tucker's Jefferson; i. 169.) The Cincinnati of Virginia, as a separate organization, no longer exists. Its last meeting was in 1822, when its funds, amounting to \$15,000, were transferred to Washington College.

² At the celebration of the 4th of July, 1784, by a public dinner, in Boston, it was thus toasted from the balcony: "May the Members of the honourable Society of Cincinnati ever retain that honour in present establishment, which their bravery and virtues had acquired in their Military." (Freeman's Journal, No. 180.)

New York, by Colonel Smith; — declared no opposition.

Delaware, by Mr. Tilton; — informed that the principal and indeed only enemies of the Cincinnati were among the class of people denominated Tories.

Colonel White, from South Carolina; — gave it as his opinion, that almost all the various classes in the State from whence he came, were opposed to the Institution in its present form.¹

Georgia, by Major Cuthbert; — declared the very opposite.

Captain Dayton arose — and informed the Meeting that he did not know the sentiments of the People generally in the State of Jersey, but that it was the determination of the Society to preserve and support its dignity.

Pennsylvania, by Governor Dickison; — as an objection of the People's, pointed out the hereditary part.

New Hampshire, by Colonel Dearbourne; — declared that the opinions of the State were very generally in

¹ This opinion of Colonel White's seems to be confirmed by a passage in the Postscript to the *Considerations on the Cincinnati*, published at Philadelphia in 1783, and written at Charleston, by Judge Aedanus Burke, over the signature of Cassius: "Since the foregoing publication was in press, a set of the Rules and Bye-Laws of the Society of Cincinnati established in South Carolina, have been printed and handed about in this city." He cites the first rule, as follows: "The State Society accedes to the propositions and rules transmitted to Maj.-Gen. Moultrie by Maj.-Gen. Heath and Steuben, respectively, on the 20th May and — day of June last: with this reservation, that if the said propositions or rules should by any construction be held obligatory on the Society, to interfere in any shape whatsoever, with the civil polity, of this or any of the United States, or the United States in general, this Society will not deem themselves bound thereby: They prizing too highly the civil rights of their country, and their own rights as citizens, to consent that a military society should in any sense dictate to civil authority."

opposition to the Institution on its present Establishment.¹

The President-General arose, and acknowledg'd the information from all the States—endeavoured to prove the disagreeable consequences which would result to the Members of the Cincinnati from preserving the Institution in its present form—illustrated the force and strength of opposition to it in a variety of examples, supported by his own knowledge, and informations from confidential friends—proposed as the most exceptionable parts and that require alteration in their very essence, the

¹ It will be seen that there was no reply from Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, or Rhode Island. The first two States were probably present, but considered their sentiments as delivered by Washington. North Carolina and Rhode Island were probably absent at this stage of the proceedings. The popular feeling in the last is manifested by a passage in Bailey's *Freeman's Journal* (Philadelphia, April 28, 1784): "We hear that the State of Rhode Island is determined to disfranchise any and every person who is a member of the Order of Cincinnati, and render them incapable of holding any post of honour and trust in that government."

It is odd, that the only notice of the session of this Meeting that I find in any of the local papers of the day, is the following paragraph in David C. Claypoole's paper (the *Pennsylvania Packet*) of June 12, 1784, where it is copied from a Charleston (S. C.) journal, as an extract of a letter dated May 5, 1784, from a gentleman in Philadelphia to his friend in that city: "I am at present as a representative to the Society of the Cincinnati, we shall have a very full meeting; members from eleven States have already appeared, and the others are hourly expected. We are wounded in our feelings to learn that so many visionary and ill-founded apprehensions, have taken possession of the minds of many citizens, whose good opinions we would wish to have; and as we are conscious of the most pure intentions, I apprehend that it will be the universal sentiment of this meeting, to expunge, strictly define, and explain, every part which can possibly give, or has given, offence to any honest, candid mind. If envy, or a restless spirit, should still pursue us with effect, we must, I suppose, submit to the rod of power, and lament the ungrateful suspicions of a country, of which we think we merit more favourable opinions."

following, viz:—the hereditary part—interference with politicks—honorary members—increase of funds from donations—and the dangers which would be the result to community from the influence they would give us—declared that was it not for the connection we stood in with the very distinguished Foreigners in this Institution, he would propose to the Society to make one great sacrifice more to the world, and abolish the Order altogether—the charitable part excepted—that considering the connection which we stood in with France, the particular situation in which our Society had placed some of their Officers, he was willing, provided we could fall on a middle way, that would neither lead us to the displeasing of them or encouraging the jealousies and suspicions of our countrymen, to adopt it. But he doubted if this was possible, and if it should so appear on a full investigation, he was determined at all events to withdraw his name from amongst us.

The General here in confidence introduced a report of a Committee of Congress, that no persons holding an hereditary title or order of nobility should be eligible to citizenship in the new State they are about to establish, and declared that he knew this to be levelled at our Institution—that our friends had prevented its passing into resolution, till the result of this meeting should be known;¹ but if we do not make it conformable to their sense of republican principles, we might expect every

¹ This curious passage seems to point out the origin of Art. I, § 9, cl. 8, of the Federal Constitution. Congress at this time was in session at Annapolis: it adjourned June 3d, to meet again at Trenton, Oct. 30, 1784.

discouragement and even *persecution* from them and the States severally. That ninety-nine in a hundred would become our violent enemies.

Here the General introduced a private letter from the Marquis Lafayette, objecting to the hereditary part of the Institution, as repugnant to a republican system, and very exceptionable.¹

Jersey and New York take the matter up on this letter, and in the strongest terms oppose the entire abolition of the hereditary rights and honours of the Society. .

Committee rose — President resum'd his seat, and the chairman reported to have made some Progress in the Business before the Committee — begged leave to sit again at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, to which time this meeting stands adjourned.

Thursday, May the 6th, 1784. Met according to adjournment. The Proceedings of the preceding day were read.

¹ "Most of the Americans here are virulent against our Association. Wadsworth must be excepted, and Dr. Franklin said little; but Jay, Adams, and all the others, warmly blame the army. You easily guess I am not remiss in opposing them. However, if it is found that the heredity endangers the true principles of democracy, I am as ready as any man to renounce it. You will be my compass, my dear General, because, at this distance, I cannot judge. In case, after better consideration, you find that heredity will injure our democratic constitutions, I join with you, by proxy, in voting against it. But I do so much rely on your judgment that, if you think heredity is a proper scheme, I shall be convinced that your patriotism has considered the matter in the best point of view. To you alone would I say so much; and I abide by your opinion in the matter. Let the foregoing be confidential, but I am sure your disinterested virtue will weigh all possible future consequences of hereditary distinctions." Lafayette to Washington; Paris, March 9, 1784. (Corr. of Rev. ed. Sparks, iv. 61.)

Order of the day moved for, and the Meeting resolved into a Committee of the Whole. A private letter was introduced by General Knox from the Chevalier, General Chateaux-leau,¹ the sentiments of which seemed opposed to the hereditary part of the Institution of Cincinnati. General Washington arose, and again opposed this part as particularly obnoxious to the people. In a very long speech, and with much warmth and agitation, he expressed himself on all the Parts of the Institution deemed exceptionable, and reiterated his determination to vacate his place in the Society, if it could not be accommodated to the feeling and pleasure of the several States.

New York spoke in favour of the present form of Institution, as perfectly consonant with the feelings of the people of their State.

A final Report of the Committee being resolved, the President resumed his seat, and the Chairman reported, that the Committee of the Whole had taken into consideration the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati, and were of opinion, that it ought to be revised and amended :— Submitted for the determination of the Meeting, whereupon 'twas resolved that a Committee, to consist of one Member from each State, should be immediately appointed for this Purpose. The ballots being taken by States, (which is the mode of voting determined in this Meeting,) the following Election is declared duly made, viz. :

¹ M. de Chastellux published his *Travels in America*: of which work, and its connection with his marriage, see an amusing tale in D'Oberkirch, iii. 287.

New Hampshire: . . .	COLONEL DEARBOURNE;
Massachusetts: . . .	GENERAL KNOX;
Rhode Island: . . .	
Connecticut: . . .	COLONEL HUMPREYS;
New York: . . .	COLONEL SMITH;
New Jersey: . . .	CHIEF JUSTICE BREARLY;
Delaware: . . .	DOCTOR TILTON;
Pennsylvania: . . .	GOVERNOR DICKINSON;
Maryland: . . .	GENERAL SMALLWOOD;
Virginia: . . .	GENERAL WHEEDON;
South Carolina: . . .	COLONEL WASHINGTON;
North Carolina: . . .	MAJOR BLOUNT;
Georgia: . . .	MAJOR CUTHBERT.

The Committee proceeded to business: and House to the reading of sundry letters and papers before them respecting the Society; some of which are referred to the Committee as connected with the Institution immediately and very materially.

A number of papers addressed to this Society being in the French language, a Committee is to be appointed to translate them. General Moylan and General Williams the committee. They are desired to translate all the French, and arrange them and other papers properly for the attention of this Meeting. Adjourned to the hour of 12 to-morrow morning.

Friday, May the 7th. Met agreeable to adjournment. Major Blount, a delegate from North Carolina, attended, produced his credentials, and took a seat with the Committee of Revision.

The Committee for translating and arranging the papers, report that they have made some progress, and ask further time for completing their business: and lay the letters and papers which are ready for inspection before the Meeting.

The Committee for revising and amending the Institution, also report that they have made some progress, and ask permission to sit again.

The Meeting proceed to the reading of papers laid before them respecting the Society.

Resolved, that the President-General have a right, *ex officio*, to attend all committees:—debate, and vote. Adjourned to 12 o'clock to-morrow.

Saturday Morning. Assembled agreeable to the adjournment of yesterday. Entered on the reading of the papers addressed to the Society, in the order they were laid before the Meeting. Major Turner, temporary scribe to the Society, begs leave to resign, which being granted, Colonel Trumbull is elected to that office.

The Committee appointed to revise and amend certain matters and things in the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati, report that they have finished their business, and beg leave to lay their proceedings before the Meeting. Resolved, that they be read and laid on the table.

The Committee for arrangement of the papers, report that they have ready for inspection of the Meeting a part, which they wish to lay on the table; and ask to sit again.

Resolved, that this General Meeting will on Monday next go into a Committee of the Whole, to take into consideration the alterations and amendments of the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati, as proposed and

reported by the Committee appointed for that purpose. Adjourned to Monday morning, at 9 o'clock.

The following is the form of the Institution, agreeable to the Alterations and Amendments proposed.¹

1st. — It having pleased the Supreme Governor of the Universe in the disposition of human affairs, to cause the separation of the Colonies of North America from the domination of Great Britain, and after a bloody conflict of eight years, to establish them Free, Independent, and Sovereign States, connected by alliances, founded on reciprocal advantage, with some of the great Princes and Powers of this Earth. Therefore, — Gratefully to commemorate this vast event — to continue the mutual Friendships which have been formed under the pressure of common danger, and in many instances cemented by the blood of the parties, and to inculcate the great social duty of laying down in peace the arms assumed for public defence, by forming an Institution which recognizes that sacred and most important principle, and to effectuate those substantial acts of Beneficence dictated by the spirit of brotherly kindness towards

¹ This form, though not concurred in, constitutes a very interesting portion of the history of the Cincinnati; and is now probably for the first time communicated to the public. The side notes refer to the action taken on its different clauses, as will more fully appear in the ensuing text.

those officers and their families, who unfortunately may be under the necessity of receiving them :

The Officers of the American army do hereby in the most solemn manner associate, constitute, and combine themselves into one Society of Friends — who, having generally been taken from the citizens of America, and holding in high veneration the character of that illustrious Roman, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, whose example they follow by returning to their citizenship, think they may with propriety denominate themselves — The Society of the Cincinnati.

Recommended. 2nd. — The Society shall be governed by the following rules and obligations.

Recommended. 3rd. — All the Commissioned Officers of the Continental Army and Navy, as well those who have resigned with honour after three years service in the capacity of Officers, or who have been deranged by the resolutions of Congress upon the several reforms of the Army, as those who shall have continued to the end of the War, have the right to become parties to this Institution; provided that they subscribe one month's pay, and sign their names to the general rules in their respective State Societies on or before the fourth day of July, 1784 — extraordinary cases excepted.

The rank, time of service, resolutions of Congress by which any have been deranged, and places of residence, must be added to each name.

4th. — Those Officers who are foreigners, *Recommended.*
not resident in any of the States, will have their names enrolled by the Secretary-General, and are to be considered as members in the Societies of any State in which they may happen to be.

5th. — The General Society will for the *Recommended.*
sake of frequent communications be divided into State Societies, and those again into such districts as shall be directed by the State Society.

6th. — The Societies of the districts to *Recommended.*
meet as often as shall be agreed upon by the State Society; those of the States annually on such days and at such places as they shall find expedient; and the General Society on the first Monday in May, annually, so long as they shall deem necessary, and afterwards at least once in every three years.

7th. — The State Societies will consist of all the members residing in each State respectively, and any member removing from one State to another, is to be considered in all respects as belonging to the Society of the State in which he shall actually reside.

8th. — The State Societies to have a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer, to be chosen annually by a majority of votes at the State Meeting.

Recommended. 9th.—The Meeting of the General Society shall consist of its Officers, and a representation from each State Society, in number not exceeding five, whose expenses shall be borne by their respective State Societies.

Recommended. 10th.—In the General Meeting, the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Assistant-Secretary, shall be chosen to serve until the next Meeting.

Recommended. 11th.—Each State Meeting shall write annually, or oftener if necessary, a Circular Letter to the other State Societies, noting whatever they may think worthy of observation respecting the good of the Society, and giving information of the Officers chosen for the current year. Copies of these letters shall be regularly transmitted to the Secretary-General of the Society, who will record them in a book to be assigned for that purpose.

12th.—Each State Society will regulate every thing respecting itself and the Societies of the districts, consistent with the general Maxims of the Cincinnati—judge of the qualifications of the members who

may be proposed, and expel any member, who, by a conduct inconsistent with a Gentleman and a Man of Honour, or by an opposition to the interest of the Community in general, or the Society in particular, may render himself unworthy to continue a Member.

13th. — Each State Society shall obtain a list of its members, and at the next annual meeting, the State Secretary shall have engrossed on parchment two copies of the institution of the Society, which every member present shall sign, and the Secretary shall endeavour to procure the signature of every absent member; one of those lists to be transmitted to the Secretary-General, to be kept in the Archives of the Society; and the other to remain in the hands of the State Secretary. *Recommended.*

14th. — From the State Lists the Secretary-General shall make out, at the first General Meeting, a complete list of the whole Society, with a copy of which he will furnish each State Secretary. *Recommended.*

15th. — The Circular Letters which have been written by the respective State Societies to each other, and the particular laws, shall be read and considered, and all measures concerted which may conduce to the benevolent principles of the Society. *Recommended.*

16th.—In order to form sufficient funds to assist the unfortunate, each Officer shall deliver to the Treasurer of the State Society one month's pay, which shall remain for the use of the State Society; the interest only, if necessary, to be appropriated to the relief of the unfortunate.

Recommended. 17th.—Donations may be received from members of the Society or others, for the express purpose of forming funds for the uses aforesaid: the interest of these donations to be appropriated in the same manner as that of the month's pay. Also monies, at the pleasure of each member, may be subscribed in the Societies of the districts, or the State Societies; the whole whereof may be applied by the State Society for the relief of the unfortunate members, or their widows and orphans.

Recommended. 18th.—And in order that there shall be at all times a sufficient number of persons in the Society to take care of and manage the funds raised as aforesaid, each member shall have liberty to dispose of by deed or will, to take effect after his decease, his right or share in the said funds, which persons so appointed shall have authority to act in managing and applying the interest of the funds agreeably to the principles of the Institution.

And in case any member should die without having disposed of his right in the said funds, the State Society of which he was a member shall have power to elect a fit person in his place for the management thereof, untill charters can be obtained from Legislative authority for more effectively carrying into execution the humane intentions of the Society.

19th.—The Secretary and Treasurer of the State Societies shall once in every year request permission of the Legislature of the State to which they severally belong, to lay before the same their books containing the proceedings of the said Societies, together with accounts of their funds and application thereof, and upon obtaining such permission, shall lay the said books and accounts before the Legislature accordingly. *Recommended.*

20th.—The Society shall have an *Order*, which shall be a Bald Eagle of Gold, bearing on its breast the Emblems hereafter described, and suspended by a deep blue ribbon edged with white, descriptive of the Union of America and France. *Recommended.*

21st.—The principal figure, Cincinnatus; three Senators presenting him with a sword and other military ensigns. On a field in the background, his wife standing at the door of their cottage — near it, a plough

and instruments of husbandry. Round the whole — *Omnia Relinquit servare Rempublicam*.¹

On the reverse :—Sun rising : a city with open gates, and vessels entering the port. Fame crowning Cincinnatus with a wreath, inscribed—*Virtutis Præmium*. Below, Hands joining, supporting a Heart, with the motto—*Esto perpetua*. Round the whole—*Societas Cincinnatorum instituta*, A. D. 1783.

Recommended. 22*d.*—A Silver Medal, representing the emblems to be given to each member of the Society, together with a diploma on parchment, whereon shall be impressed the figures of the Order and Medal as above mentioned.

Recommended. 23*d.*—The Society, deeply impressed with a sense of the generous assistance this country has received from France, and desirous of perpetuating the friendships which have been formed and so happily subsisted between the Officers of the Allied Forces in

¹ See North American Review, vol. 77, p. 288. The cost of the eagles, I believe, was twenty dollars each : they could not now be furnished at near that rate. It may be noted here that in the legend prescribed by the Institution of 1783, as given in the recent publications of the Society (and indeed in the oldest printed copy of the Institution that I have seen, viz : New York : printed by Samuel Loudon, 1784, it is the same), the word *relinquit* is used. On the eagle, the diploma, and in all their later proceedings, *relinquit* is substituted. The occasion of this change is not known to me. As for the silver medal, it was probably never executed.

the prosecution of the War, having directed that the President-General should transmit the Order of the Society to each of the characters hereafter named, viz :

His Excellency the Chevalier de la Luzerne, Minister Plenipotentiary ;¹

His Excellency the Sieur Gerard, late Minister Plenipotentiary ;²

Their Excellencies the Count d'Estaing ;³ the Count de Grasse ;⁴ Count de Barras ;⁵ the Chevalier des Touches ; and Admirals and Commanders in the Navy ;

His Excellency the Count de Rocham-

¹ Anne-César, Chevalier de la Luzerne, had been a major-general and colonel of the grenadiers of France ; but his later years were given to diplomacy. From 1779 to 1783 he was minister to the Congress, by whom he was much esteemed. He died in 1791.

² Through the intervention of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, a splendid original full-length portrait of Gérard now adorns the Independence Hall, Philadelphia.

³ Charles-Hector, Comte d'Estaing, born in 1729, entered the army at an early age, and served under Lally in India. Being taken prisoner at Madras in 1759, he broke his parole ; for which cause the English, on his recapture, kept him in close confinement. This is said to have embittered him against that nation for the rest of his life. In 1763 he received a naval grade, and in 1778 was sent with a squadron to America, where he was engaged in many important actions. His conduct in the domestic troubles of France was not satisfactory to either party. He became a patriot on calculation, says his biographer, without ceasing to be a courtier from habit. Yet, though a witness against the Queen on her trial, his own head was not preserved. He was sentenced to the guillotine, April 28, 1794. In 1792 he had been appointed admiral by the Republic.

⁴ In 1849, Louis A. Depau succeeded his grandfather, the Comte de Grasse, in the Cincinnati of New York.

⁵ Louis, Comte de Barras, lieut.-gen. in the French navy.

beau,¹ Commander-in-Chief, and the Generals and Colonels in his Army; —

Do now further direct that the President-General also transmit the Order as soon as may be to his Excellency the Marquis de Vaudreuil,² and acquaint him that the Society do themselves the honour to consider him as a Member.

Monday morning, nine o'clock: 10th of May, 1784.³ Met according to adjournment. The order of the day being moved for, the Society resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, General Smallwood in the chair. The Institution of the Cincinnati as revised and amended was read generally, and by paragraphs particularly, that it might be debated on and more fully considered in every possible point of view.

¹ Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, after many years of military life and a narrow escape from the guillotine of Robespierre, survived to receive the compliments of Napoleon. "Général" — said the latter, pointing to Berthier and other officers who had served under Rochambeau in America — "Général, voilà vos élèves." "Les élèves ont bien surpassé leur maître," politely replied the Count. He died in 1807, in his 82d year.

² Louis-Philippe de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil (*b.* 1723; *d.* 1802) was son of the well-known Governor of Canada. He entered the navy at an early age, and commanded the *Arethusa* in the action so famous in British song. In our Revolutionary War, he was engaged in the chief naval battles in the West Indies. In the French Revolution, he was a decided loyalist.

³ On this day the peace between England and America was officially proclaimed, with appropriate illuminations, etc., at Philadelphia, by the public authorities.

The sentiments of the majority of the Meeting appeared opposed to the Institution in its present alterations.

The President-General most expressly declared against it:—gave it as his opinion that the 18th paragraph would be construed as intentional in us to make the Order hereditary; and only an alteration of the terms, but in fact expressing the same designs as held forth in the original Institution. He warmly and in plain language or by implication seemed desirous to expunge all the essentials with which the Society was endowed by those from whom it had its origin.¹

Resolved, to take the sense of the General Committee of the Meeting on the several paragraphs of the Institution as revised, altered, and amended, in their order.

Upon reading them, it is resolved to recommit all but the 1st, 7th, 8th, 12th, and 16th paragraphs.

The President resumed his seat, and the Chairman reported accordingly. The Report accepted by the Meeting, and 'tis resolved that the Committee for altering and amending the Institution be excused further proceedings thereon. Resolved, also, that a Committee of Five be appointed, to take into consideration the Institution and proposed amendments, and make such alterations as they may deem proper; of which they are to report to this Meeting as soon as may be. Elected for this Committee; Governor Dickinson, General Knox, General Williams, Col. Lee and Col. Smith.²

¹ The plan agreed upon on the Hudson, in May, 1783, and which still governs the Society, is here indicated.

² It seems evident that though the influence of Washington was very

Laid before the Meeting and read, a letter from Gen. Armand¹ and other French officers (Major L'Enfant² particularly, requesting a representation in this General Meeting or Society. Resolved, that the consideration thereof be referred to the Committee for attending to Foreign and other Letters and Papers addressed to this Meeting. Adjourned till to-morrow morning, twelve o'clock.

Tuesday, 12 o'clock. The Society met, according to adjournment, and went into the reading of letters and papers before them.

The Committee for the translating of the French and arranging all the papers, report that they have completed

strongly felt in this General Meeting, a committee of one from each State formed a body too large to be swayed throughout by his wishes. A smaller committee was therefore substituted, of whose members Knox and Lee, and perhaps Williams, held confidential relations with the chief; while Dickinson's views are known to have coincided with his own. It is probable also, from his connections, that Smith was not averse to the proposed change.

¹ Armand Tuffin, Marquis de la Rouerie, and a brigadier in the American army; died 1791. His portrait is in the Hall of the Hist. Soc. of Pa.

² Of this officer, who took such an efficient interest in the formation of the Cincinnati, and who was employed to procure in Europe the proper decorations for the members, I find the following notice in a very valuable MS. volume of extracts from the French Archives, procured at Paris by the Hon. Richard Rush, and presented by the Hon. Wm. B. Reed to the Hist. Soc. of Penna.; which gives the *États de Services* of most of the officers of the French army who were employed in America:—"L'Enfant, capitaine au service des États Unis depuis 1778. Était lieutenant dans les troupes des colonies lorsqu'il à passé en 1777 au service américain. Était au siège de Savannah, où il été blessé, et est resté sur le champ de bataille. Il a servi depuis dans l'armée du Général Washington. On en fait beaucoup de cas, à aussi que le S'r. de Villefranche consommé sa fortune au service des États Unis. Obtient un pension de 500, et sera présenté pour une compagnie dans les troupes provinciales."

their business, and beg leave to lay before the Meeting sundry letters.

The Committee for altering certain matters and things in the Institution, report that they have made considerable progress in the business—shall be able to make a final report by to-morrow morning, and beg leave to sit till that time.

Finished reading all the letters and papers addressed to the meeting, and resolved that they shall lay on the table until the final report of the Committee for altering and amending certain matters and things in the Institution be made. Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock.

Wednesday morning, 10 o'clock; 12th of May. Met agreeable to adjournment.

The Committee of Five appointed to alter and amend certain Matters and Things in the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati, report:—that they have finished that business; and lay their proceedings before the Meeting. A copy of the Institution as revised, altered, and amended, is in page —, immediately succeeding the Alterations and Amendments as proposed by the Committee from the several States.¹

¹ For the convenience of the reader, the Form of Institution as proposed by the Committee of Five, is placed by the editor immediately after the paragraph to which this note refers. That of the Committee from the several States has already been given in the text. The side-notes to either Form indicate the corrections or amendments which particular paragraphs as reported, encountered in the General Meeting. The Form as here given differs from that printed by the Society in the articles expunged on debate, as well as in some minor matters of phraseology and arrangement; inso-much as it was referred on the 13th of May to a committee for critical correction and engrossment: (*vide post.*)

The form of Institution reported by the Committee of Five.

1st. — It having pleased the Supreme Governor of the Universe to give success to the arms of our Country, and to establish the United States free and independent — Therefore, gratefully to commemorate this event; to inculcate to the latest ages the duty of laying down in peace arms assumed for public defence, by forming an Institution which recognizes that most important principle; to continue the mutual friendships which commenced under the pressure of common danger; and to effectuate the acts of beneficence dictated by the spirit of brotherly kindness towards those Officers and their families who unfortunately may be under the necessity of receiving them. The Officers of the American Army do hereby constitute themselves into a Society of Friends; and professing the highest veneration for the character of that illustrious Roman, Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus, denominate themselves the Society of the Cincinnati.

2nd. — The persons who constitute this Society are all the commissioned and brevet officers of the Army and Navy of the United States who have served three years, and who left the service with reputation.

All such Officers who were in actual service at the conclusion of the War; and all the principal staff-officers of the Continental Army.

Officers who have been deranged by the several Resolutions of Congress, upon the several Reforms of the Army.

There are also admitted into this Society the late and present Ministers of His Most Christian Majesty to the United States; all the Generals and Colonels of Regiments and Legions of the Land Forces; and all the Admirals and Captains of the Navy ranking as Colonels, who have coöperated with the Armies of the United States in their exertions for Liberty; and such other persons as have been admitted by their respective State Meetings.

3rd.—The Society shall have a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. There shall be a Meeting of the Society, at least once in three years, on the first Monday in May, at such place as the President shall appoint. The said Meeting shall consist of the aforesaid Officers, whose expenses shall be equally borne by the State Funds, and a representation from each State Society. The business of this General Meeting shall be to regulate the distribution of surplus funds; to appoint Officers for the ensuing term; and to conform the laws of State Meetings to the general objects of the Institution.

4th. — The Society shall be divided into State Meetings, and each Meeting shall have a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively; to be chosen by a majority of votes annually. The State Meetings shall be on the Anniversary of Independence. They shall concert such measures as may conduce to the benevolent purposes of the Society.

And the several State Meetings shall, at suitable periods, make applications to their respective Legislatures for the grant of Charters.

5th. — Any member removing from one State to another, is to be considered, in all respects, as belonging to the Meeting of the State, in which he shall actually reside.

6th. — || No honorary members shall hereafter be admitted but upon election by the State Meetings, with permission of the Government of the State in which the Meeting is held, nor shall any member be elected but by the meeting of the State in which he actually resides. ||

Expunged.

7th. — The State Meeting shall judge of the qualifications of its members, and admonish, or if necessary, expel any one who may conduct himself unworthily.

8th. — The Secretary of each State Meeting shall register the names of the members resident in each State, and transmit a copy thereof to the Secretary of the Society.

9th. — In order to form funds for the relief of unfortunate members, their widows

and orphans, each officer shall deliver to the Treasurer of the State Meeting one month's pay. || And donations may be received from members and others: the interest of the pay and donations, if necessary, to be applied to the purposes before mentioned. ||

Expunged.

10th. — No donations shall be received but from citizens of the United States.

11th. — The funds of each State Meeting shall be loaned to the State, by permission of the Legislature, and the interest only, annually, to be applied for the purposes of the Society: and if in process of time, difficulties should occur in executing the intentions of the Society, the Legislatures of the respective States be requested to make such equitable dispositions as may be most correspondent with the original design of the Institution.


12th. — The subjects of His Most Christian Majesty, members of this Society, may hold meetings at their pleasure, and may form regulations for their police, conformable to the objects of the Institution, and to the spirit of their Government.

13th. — The Society shall have an Order, which shall be a Bald Eagle of gold, &c., and as expressed in the original Institution, and in the Plan of Amendment proposed

by the Committee of the States for revising the Institution, which is annexed to these Papers in its order.

Upon this Report of the Committee and the reading of the Institution, the Meeting resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole — Gen. Wheedon in the chair — and with freedom debated the paragraphs as they were severally and repeatedly read. A considerable majority concurred in the 1st, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th: — determined to postpone the consideration of the 2d: — the 3d and 6th to be recommitted to the Committee of Five. The Committee rising, report accordingly to the President, who resumed his seat. This Meeting resolves to take up the Report of the General Committee to-morrow morning at nine o'clock; to which time it stands adjourned.

Thursday, the 13th of May. Met according to adjournment, and the order of the day being called, the Meeting proceeded to the consideration of the Institution of the Society of Cincinnati as altered and amended, by Paragraphs severally. — Confirmed the 1st; made the alterations in the 2d Paragraph as annexed in their order on page —, agreeable to the reference.

 The Opinion of the Meeting was taken in regard to the admission of officers of any individual State to be parties to the Institution of the Cincinnati, who had served in time and manner proposed: and in the affirmative, notwithstanding that part of the 1st clause of the 2d Paragraph which appears to limit the right to officers of the Army and Navy of the United States collectively.

The 3d Paragraph was confirmed;—the 4th also, with the addition as on page —; the 5th approved without any alteration; the 6th expunged; the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th;—all assented to.

Resolved that the Institution be styled —The Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati, as altered and amended by the General Meeting held at Philadelphia, &c.

Resolved, that a Committee of Three be appointed to prepare a Circular Letter to the several State Societies with the Institution as now amended, setting forth the reasons which induced this Meeting to make the alterations;—Governor Dickinson, Colonels Lee and Humphreys the Committee. The Institution is referred to the above Committee for critical correction and engrossment.

Resolved, that all the letters and papers addressed to this Meeting, be referred to a Committee of Three to report thereon;—Gen. Knox, Col. Smith, and Gen. Williams, appointed.

The thirteen States concurred in the Institution, as altered, &c., except New York, divided:—Smith, for; Fairlie, against; Cortland, absent.

Adjourned till 12 o'clock to-morrow.

Convened according to adjournment, Friday, 14th of May. The Committee who were appointed to prepare the draft of a Circular Letter, &c., &c., &c., report that they have made some progress in their business, and hope to be able to make a final report by to-morrow morning, and ask leave to sit again.

Resolved, that this meeting will to-morrow ballot for Officers to the General Society of the Cincinnati.

The Committee appointed to take into consideration the Papers and Letters addressed to this Society report that there are some from France and one from Gen. Armand that require answers; and others that ought to be referred to the Society in France. Resolved, that a Committee of Three be appointed to prepare answers;—Gens. Knox and Williams, and Col. Smith. Resolved, that this Committee be authorized to confer with Major L'Enfant on pecuniary and other matters, and act thereon.¹

Resolved, that a Committee of Three be appointed to draft the form of a diploma for the Members of the Cincinnati: Major Turner, Captains Dayton and Fairlie appointed. Adjourned till to-morrow morning, 11 o'clock.

Saturday, 15th of May. Met agreeably to adjournment. The Committee for preparing drafts of letters reported and laid on the table a draft of a letter to Baron Viomenil²

¹ In a letter to the New York Society, read at its meeting on July 4th, 1786, Major L'Enfant refers to his correspondence with this General Meeting of 1784. Its subject seems at least in part to have had relation to the proceedings of the Cincinnati of France, at the meeting at Paris, March 10th, 1784, and the pretensions of unqualified foreigners. See Extract from the Proceedings of the New York State Society, etc. (New York, 1786), p. 17.

² Antoine-Charles du Houx, Baron de Vioménil, was next in command under Rochambeau. His life was passed in the profession of arms, in which he was constantly distinguished. He died Nov. 9, 1792, of wounds received in the defence of the Tuileries on Aug. 10, 1792.

I have seen it stated that when the terms of capitulation of Yorktown were in consideration, and the contents of the British military chest were made known, the French Commissioner, considering that the amount was small, and that in all likelihood Lord Cornwallis would stand in need of the money for the personal accommodation of his troops and himself, volunteered the suggestion that the point should not be raised, and that the treasure, such as it was, should be left at the Earl's disposal. To

and one to Brigadier-General Armand. They also reported that they had received and examined Major L'Enfant's Account for his agency in France, which was laid on the table.

On motion resolved, that the officers of His Most Christian Majesty's Army and Navy who have served in America and who were promoted to the rank of Colonel, are comprehended in the Institution of the Cincinnati as altered and amended.

The Committee on the Circular Letter and also for correcting and engrossing the Institution, reported and laid on the table the draft of a Circular Letter, and also the Institution as amended, fairly engrossed and corrected.

On motion,—the draft of the Circular Letter having been read paragraph by paragraph, fully considered, and the same unanimously approved—resolved, that the President of the Meeting be desired to sign and forward a copy of the same to each of the respective State Meetings.

A draft of a letter to Baron Viomenil;—a draft of one to Brigadier-General Bogenville;¹—and one to Brigadier-

this, however, Col. Laurens, for the Americans, objected positively. The amount, he said, might be trifling to a great European State, but it was of importance to such a government as his own. Consequently, the military chest was included in the articles of surrender. Vioménil afterwards earned the praise of the English, by pressing the use of his purse, to the extent of £2000, upon Cornwallis, who, in this emergency, might be reasonably supposed to have been in a condition to receive such a supply. It happened, however, that the Earl had a sufficient sum with his agent in New York to meet all his exigencies.

¹ Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, the celebrated voyager, who had been A. D. C. to Montcalm in America during the Seven Years' War: *b.* 1729; *d.* 1814. He commanded a division under De Grasse, and in 1781 was opposed to Hood before Martinique. In 1782 he shared in several other

General Armand having been read and approved, are ordered to be transcribed, signed and transmitted by the President.

Ordered, that a Committee of Two be appointed to superintend the printing and publishing in pamphlet form the Circular Letter to the State Societies with the Institution as altered and amended by this Meeting:—Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Turner chosen.¹

Ordered, that the same gentlemen procure the Circular Letter to be also published in the most public newspapers.²

Agreeably to the order of the day, the Members proceeded to ballot for the Officers of the Society for the ensuing term;—when, the ballots being taken,—

His Excellency General Washington was unanimously chosen President. General Gates was chosen Vice-President;³ General Knox, Secretary; and General Williams, Assistant Secretary.

Adjourned till Monday next, 9 o'clock.

Monday, 17th of May. Assembled agreeable to adjournment. A letter from General Gates was received and read,

actions; was promoted to the rank of *chef d'escadre*; and repassed to the land service, with the grade of *maréchal de camp*.

¹ My copy of this rare tract bears the following title: "A Circular Letter, addressed to the State Societies of the Cincinnati, by the General Meeting, convened at Philadelphia, May 3, 1784. Together with the Institution, as altered and amended. Philadelphia, Printed by E. Oswald and D. Humphreys, at the Coffee-House. M,DCC,LXXXIV." 8vo. pp. 8.

² I have looked over several of the Philadelphia papers from May to September, 1784, and find no such publishment.

³ Gen. Gates held this place till 1787, when he was replaced by Gen. Mifflin. He seems to have filled no other office in either the General or the New York Society.

signifying his grateful acceptance of the office of Vice-President of the Society of the Cincinnati.

On motion, resolved:—That Monsieur D'Tarlie,¹ Intendant and second officer of the French auxiliary Army; and the Chevalier de la Meth,² Colonel by brevet;—also the Count de Sonnsvielle;³—the Count la Touche;⁴—the Count de Kergasien;⁵—the Chevalier Ryguille;—the

¹ “M. de Tarlé, aide Major-Général: sert de 1759, était capitaine dans le régiment de Bouillon: a rang de lieutenant colonel du 24 Mars, 1780: a servi avec distinction: est rempli de talents.” (MS. Fr. Mil. Arch.—See Robin's Travels, 45.)

² “Chevalier de Lameth, aide maréchal général, des Logis, capitaine réformé est dans le régiment Royal de Cavalerie. Agé de 26 ans. Sous lieutenant du 29 Juillet, 1776. Rang de capitaine le 6, 9bre, 1779. Il a eu une blessure très grave à l'attaque (à Yorktown): il est à craindre qu'il n'en reste estropié; est plein du courage, et annonce des talents très distingués; est neveu de Monsieur le maréchal duc de Broglie. Il demande une place de Mestre-de-camp en second et la croix de St. Louis en quittant celle de Malte.” (MS. Fr. Mil. Arch.) * * * “A été fait aide maréchal générale des Logis surnuméraire au mois de Nov., 1782. C'est un officier distingué: obtient une pension de 1500.” (Ib.)

³ Probably M. de Siouville, commanding “His Most Christian Majesty's packet-boat, the Warwick,” which arrived at New York from Europe, May 3, 1784.

⁴ Louis René-Madelène Levassor de la Touche-Treville, who was *capitaine de vaisseau* on the *Hermione*, which brought out Lafayette in 1780. In 1782, he again came to America, with 3,000,000 francs for Congress. By these means, and by some spirited actions on the coast, his name was popular in this country. He died an Admiral in 1804.

⁵ Perhaps the same mentioned in MS. Fr. Mil. Arch. “Escadre de M. d'Estaing; Savannah. Etat Major. *Gautier de Kerveguen*, capitaine d'infanterie, aide maréchal générale des logis des troupes de débarquement. Entre au service en 1775 eu qualité d'Ingénieur de la Marine. Passé à St. Domingue comme aide de camp de M. d'Estaing, il y a fait le service d'Ingénieur depuis 1764–1766. Ingénieur géographe des camps en 1767 à été envoyé en Corse jusqu'en 1769. Capitaine d'Infanterie avec appointement en 1769, à été employé sur les côtes et sur les frontieres jusqu'en 1777. Il a fait toute la campagne de M. d'Estaing et s'est

Chevalier du Quesne;¹ — the Count de Trevalies;² — the Chevalier Maulivriers; — the Chevalier de Vallonge; — the Count de Capelles; and Captains and Commanders of ships and frigates of the French Navy, who were employed on special service on the coast of America, and who are mentioned particularly by His Excellency, the Minister of France, are entitled by the spirit and intention of the Institution to become Members of the Society.

On particular application by letter from Lieutenant-Colonel de Bouchet,³ Resolved: — That 'tis the opinion of this General Meeting that Lieutenant-Colonel de Bouchet is entitled, from his service, to be a Member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Several drafts of letters, viz.: — one to Chevalier de la Luzerne; one to Count Rochambeau; one to Count Barras;

trouvé à toutes les affaires sur terre qui ont eu lieu pendant les 21 mois de campagne de cette escadre. Il avait monté un des premiers à l'assaut du Morne de l'hôpital de la Grenade, il a encore donné au siège de Savannah des preuves aussi utiles que multipliées de sa valeur."

¹ The Chevalier du Quesne arrived at Philadelphia, March 23, 1783, in command of the French frigate *Triumph*, with the proclamation of the suspension of hostilities. July 4, 1850, the Marquis du Quesne was admitted a member of the New York Cincinnati, in right of the late Marquis his father.

² Perhaps "M. de Trenovay, Capitaine. Lieutenant au Régiment de Foix en Janvier, 1757. Capitaine en Novembre, 1762: nommé major à Savannah par de d'Estaing à la fin d'Octobre, 1779." (MS. Fr. Mil. Arch.)

³ "Du Bouchet: — aide Major Général: sert de 1770: capitaine de 1779. Excellent sujet qui a servi avec valeur: est plein d'intelligence." (MS. Fr. Mil. Arch.) Probably the Marquis Denis-Jean-Florimond Langlois, who joined the Americans in 1776; served at Saratoga; and returned to France in 1783, well esteemed by both the American and French leaders. He received the Order of the Cincinnati; and in 1788, was made Colonel. In the Revolution he was a loyalist and an *émigré*; he died in 1826, aged 74, leaving a respectable literary reputation. (Biog. Univ.)

one to Count D'Estaing; and one to Marquis Lafayette, being read and approved, Ordered, that they be transcribed, signed, and forwarded by the President.

A draft of a letter to the Senior Land and Naval Officers and others, Members of the Society of the Cincinnati, being read, was approved; and is ordered to be transcribed, signed, and transmitted by the President.

From the General Meeting held in Philadelphia on the first Monday in May, 1784—To the Senior Land and Naval Officers and others, Members of the Society of the Cincinnati in France.¹

“GENTLEMEN;

“We, the Delegates of the Cincinnati, having judged it expedient to make several material alterations and amendments in our Institution, and having thought it our duty to communicate the reasons upon which we have acted, in a Circular Address to the State Societies, do now transmit for your information a transcript of that letter, together with a copy of the Institution as revised and amended.

“Conscious of having done what prudence and love of country dictated, we are persuaded you will be satisfied with the propriety of our conduct, when you are informed our decisions were influenced by a conviction that some things contained in our original system might eventually be productive of consequences which we had not foreseen, as well as by the current of sentiments which appeared to prevail among our fellow-citizens. Under these circumstances, we viewed it as no proof of magnanimity, to per-

¹ In the original MS., this letter is placed at the end of the Journal.

sist in any thing which might possibly be erroneous, or to counteract the opinion of Community, however founded.

“Nor were we displeased to find the jealous eye of Patriotism watching over those liberties which had been established by our common exertions;—especially as our countrymen appeared fully disposed to do justice to our intentions, and to apprehend no evils but such as might happen in process of time, after we, in whom they placed so much confidence, should have quitted the stage of human action:—and we flatter ourselves we felt not less interested in guarding against disastrous contingencies, in averting present or future political evils, than the most zealous of our compatriots. For us, then, it is enough that our benevolent purposes of relieving the unfortunate should not be frustrated;—that our Friendships should be as immutable as they are sincere;—and that you have received the tokens of them with such tender marks of sensibility. For you, Gentlemen, let it be sufficient that your merits and services are indelibly impressed upon the hearts of a whole Nation, and that your names and actions can never be lost in oblivion.

“Cherishing such sentiments, and reciprocating all your affections, we pray you will have the goodness to believe, that although nothing could have increased our friendship, yet by your alacrity in associating with us you have taken the most effectual measures for riveting more strongly those indissoluble ties.”

“We have the honour, &c., &c.”¹

¹ This letter must have had a speedy passage, since on June 25, 1784, we find Lafayette writing to John Adams, enclosing him “the new-modelled regulations of the Cincinnati. My principles,” goes on the Marquis,

The Committee for preparing the form of a diploma, reported and lay on the table the draft of a form, which being read and considered, was approved, and is as follows:

Be it known that ——— is a Member of the Society of the Cincinnati; instituted by the Officers of the American Army, at the Period of its dissolution, as well to commemorate the great Event which gave Independence to North America, as for the laudable Purpose of inculcating the Duty of laying down in Peace Arms assumed for public Defence, and of uniting in Acts of brotherly Affection, and Bonds of perpetual Friendship the Members constituting the same.

In Testimony whereof I, the President of the said Society, have hereunto set my hand at ———, in the State of ———, this — day of ———, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and ——— and in the ——— Year of the Independence of the United States.

By order,

———— Secretary.

———— President.

“have ever been against heredity, and while I was in Europe disputing about it with a few friends, my letters to the assembly, and still more particularly to the president, made them sensible of my opinion upon that matter. Until heredity was given up, I forebore mentioning in Europe what sense I had expressed. But Mr. Jay being in Paris, I at once explained my conduct to him, and he appeared very well satisfied. * * * Whatever has been thought offensive, you see the Cincinnati have given it up. Now the new frame must be examined. In every circumstance, my dear Sir, depend upon it, you will find me what I have ever been, and perhaps with some *éclat*, a warm friend to the army, a still warmer advocate for the cause of liberty; but those two things, when the army is put to the proof, you will ever acknowledge to agree with each other.” (VIII. Adams, 205.)

Major L'Enfant having produced his accompt for his Agency in France; — Ordered, that a draft be made on Gen. M'Dougal, Treasurer of this Society, for the sum of six hundred and thirty dollars, to be paid to Major L'Enfant as the balance of his accompt.

On motion, resolved; — That Major Turner and Captain Claypole be a committee to superintend and procure the engraving on the Copper Plate brought by Major L'Enfant from France, the written form of the diploma, as approved by the Meeting.¹

On motion, resolved; — That the thanks of this Meeting be presented to Major L'Enfant for his great care and attention in the execution of the business of this Society committed to him to be transacted in France.

Resolved, that a Committee of Three be appointed to revise and correct the proceedings of this Meeting, and to make out the Extracts necessary to be sent to the Society in France and to the several State Societies; — Members chosen, were Gen. Williams, Col. Trumball and Col. Heth.

Ordered, that the Committee for procuring the written form of the Diploma to be engraved on the Plate do, when the same is executed, deliver the Copper Plate into the hands of the Secretary or his Assistant, to be placed in the Archives of the Society.

Adjourned till to-morrow, 9 o'clock. Previous to this adjournment the matter of wearing the badge of our Order was agitated, as to time and place when it would

¹ It is probable that all the ornamental designs of the diploma were engraved upon the copper-plate in France, and that nothing but its words were inserted here. Impressions on vellum of the plate in either condition are before the editor.

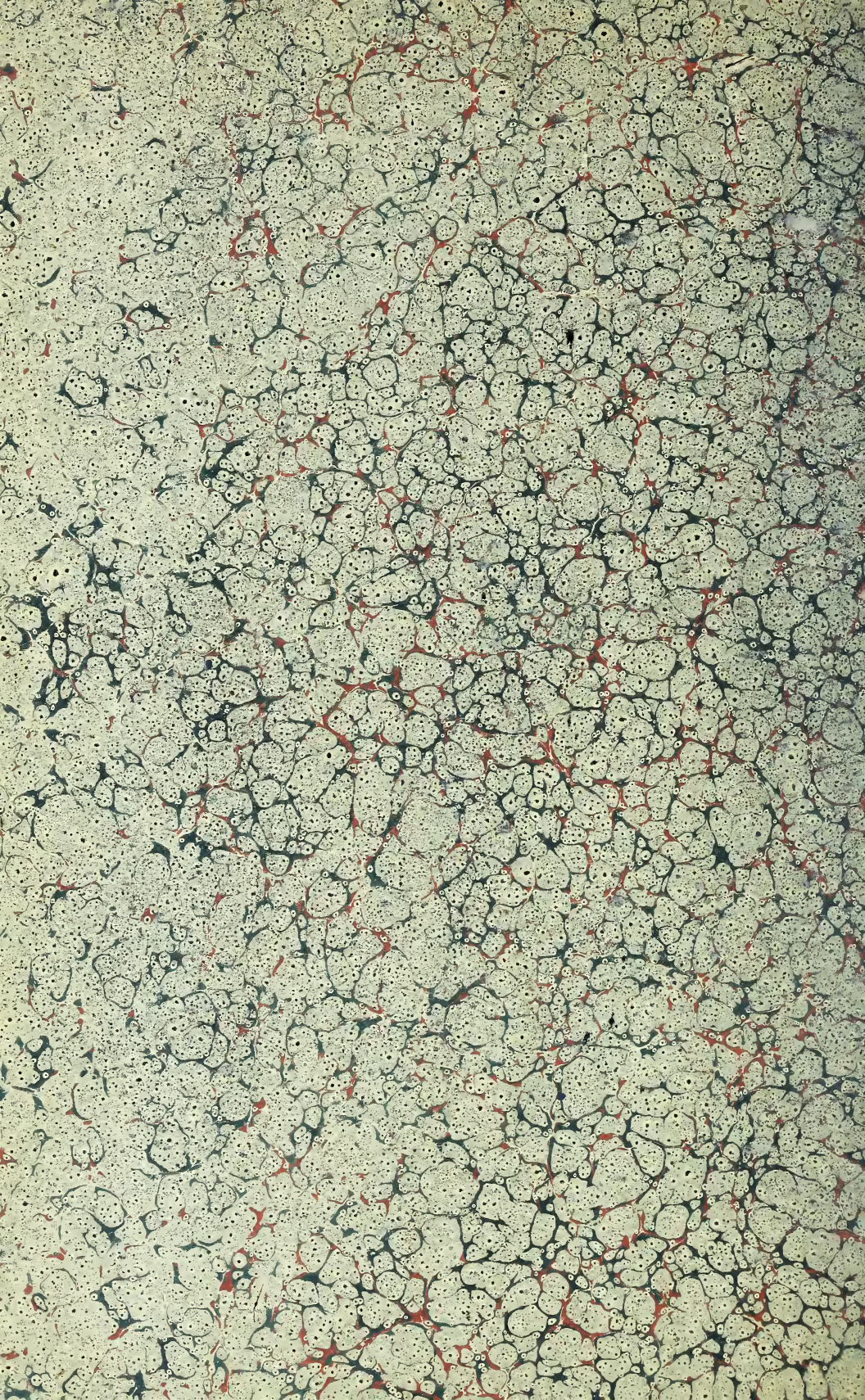
be proper: and it appeared fully to be the sense of the Meeting that it should not be ostentatious and in common; and only on days of convention to commemorate the Institution, or when we were to attend the funeral of some deceased Member. Though no vote was called or taken (as it was thought improper so to do), yet this was understood to be a general sentiment, and meant for the government of every Member of the Cincinnati while residing in this country. In France, it is supposed that a different practice would prevail, and as the Bald Eagle is there held in high estimation, that it will generally be worn by Americans on their travels through that country:—at least, by all those who may be desirous of this distinction.¹

Tuesday, the 18th of May. Assembled agreeably to adjournment.²

¹ Though the badge is often seen in the portraits of the original members of the Society, the rule laid down here has generally been followed in every-day life. In Europe, however, the Order was, at least until the triumph of the French Revolution, constantly borne in public. Major L'Enfant in writing to the N. Y. Society, in 1786, acknowledges "La faveur que sa Majesté très Chrestienne a bien voulu nous accorder, en nous permettant de porter la marque de notre union dans son royaume, où nul autre ordre étrangère est tolleré. Le crédit dont nous jouissons dans les autres cours d'Europe, où nombre de nos frères, qui y sont les premières en rang et en réputation, y font briller l'Aigle de Cincinnati," etc. (Proceedings of N. Y. Soc., 1786, p. 16.)

² Here the MS. terminates abruptly. The Meeting probably assembled on the 18th of May but to adjourn *sine die*.

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